



THE INDEPENDENT

2.957

WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 1996 40p

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Police launch breath-test crackdown

Automatic checks for all drivers

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

The police are ready to launch a new clampdown on drink-driving following fears that a hard core of motorists is continuing to go on the road while over the limit.

Under new police proposals every motorist involved in a road accident, however minor, would undergo a compulsory breath test. The compulsory drink-driving initiative is expected to be given the go-ahead today at the Chief Constables' Council, the main ratifying body of the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo). Under the proposals any driver involved in a road accident at which a police officer attends or is asked to investigate will be breathalysed. Since 1992 all drivers in Britain are automatically breathalysed after accidents in which someone is injured. However, when no one is hurt it is up to the police officer's discretion whether drivers should be tested.

Police chiefs are concerned that the anti drink-driving campaign has stalled. In 1994, 678,500 people took breath tests in England and Wales - 13 per cent more than the previous year. There were 93,300 people who tested positive or refused tests - up by about 4,000 on 1993.

Studies have identified that middle-aged men are particularly resistant to anti drink-drive campaigns. A study in 1994 also found that 93 per cent of motorists convicted of drink-driving and driving had at least two offences, suggesting that the problem is confined to a small group of people.

The percentage of people found positive when tested has dramatically declined since 1984, when 42 per cent were found over the limit, but in re-

cent years the decline has slowed. In 1990, it was 17 per cent, this dropped 1 per cent in 1991, rose to 17 per cent in 1992, dropped to 15 per cent the following year and reached 14 per cent in 1994.

David Williams, Chief Constable of Surrey and chairman of Acpo's Traffic Committee, is expected to say in a report at today's meeting: "There's concern that the downward trend in



drink-driving has reached a plateau and there's a need to get the hard core who are ignoring the message."

One way of doing this, Mr Williams, is expected to suggest is to ensure that every driver involved in a road accident will be breath-tested whether or not alcohol is suspected. At present a police officer can force a person to take a breath-test if there is reasonable cause to suspect that the person has been driving or attempting to drive with alcohol in their body, that he or she has committed a driving offence, or that they have been involved in an accident.

Some forces already test for alcohol after almost every accident, but others only use a breathalyser when someone has been hurt. Several forces are

known to be unhappy about having compulsory tests because of the extra costs.

Helen Peggs, of Victim Support, said yesterday that the group had long campaigned for compulsory testing in cases involving death or injury. "There's a strong feeling among bereaved families that many causes of road accidents are not adequately dealt with in court. Additional testing would also deter drink-driving," she said.

In a separate development, the police are also considering lowering the standard used to match fingerprints found at a crime scene with those of a suspect. A report for police chiefs has concluded that the current system, in which there must be 16 identical features between the prints, is arbitrary and allows many criminals to escape prosecution.

Instead they will be asked to consider replacing it with a similar system to the one used in Australia, in which the prosecution relies upon a qualified expert to determine whether two sets of prints match. This may be based on less than 16 identical features. Experts compare the unique joins and ridges of a person's finger print.

A Home Office spokeswoman said: "The 16-point system is widely used. However, the police are entitled to change their working practice."

Duncan Lustig-Prean, deputy director of Liberty, the civil rights group, yesterday expressed grave concern about any change in which the standard of proof might be lowered. He said: "If the scientific standards are lowered and the opinion of a so-called expert is relied more upon this could lead to mistakes. The current 16-point system is considered fool-proof, if the quality of this is lowered the defence must be given a chance to challenge expert evidence."

Under the volcano: An island waits in fear



Mother and child look to the darkening skies of Olveston, Montserrat, where volcanic ash shot five miles high over the island on Monday night just days after the 9,000 residents were evacuated to government shelters and private homes at the northern end of the 33-square-mile British colony. The Soufriere Hills volcano, which had been virtually dormant for the past 100 years, is spewing a mixture of ash and hot gaseous rock. Britain is sending two top seismologists to the Caribbean island as fears of a massive volcanic eruption soar. Photograph: AP Photo

Labour attacks Ulster policy

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Labour last night made its first public criticism of the Government's policy on Ulster, when Marjorie Mowlam, the party's Northern Ireland spokeswoman, said it had made an "error of judgement" by not making public its detailed proposals for an elected peace forum and the ground rules for subsequent all-party talks.

The criticism came as it launched an initiative designed to keep the peace process on track. Dr Mowlam called on the Government to make its plans public immediately, amid nationalist fears that the single seat majority it faces after tomorrow's Staffordshire South East by-election could force the Tories to make concessions to the Ulster Unionists who will increasingly hold the balance in the Commons over the coming months.

Dr Mowlam said that she was against any attempt to "enhance the role of" the 110 member forum from which negotiators will be chosen. While John Major has explicitly promised that the forum will in no way turn into a Stormont-style assembly, there are fears within the nationalist community that what will be inevitably be the unionist-dominated forum could be given excessive influence over the progress of all-party talks.

Dr Mowlam is pressing the Government to publish its detailed proposals to allay such fears and she warned last night that the "forum must be entirely separate from the negotiations and make no contribution to the negotiations unless specifically asked to do so by the negotiators themselves."

The initiative is significant because the Government is counting on Labour support when it brings forward the legislation for the Northern Ireland elections planned for 30 May. Labour is not threatening to withhold its support for the Bill, but wants its views taken into account before the legislation comes forward. Dr Mowlam, who also re-

leased for the first time detailed questions about the process which she put to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary on 2 April, said: "Bipartisanship is more crucial than ever. With the Government on a knife-edge we must continue to put the peace process above party politics."

In a separate move, Dr Mowlam is proposing a new independent body to examine the case - and possible routes - for further marches in Northern Ireland in the wake of Monday's stand-off between

loyalists and the RUC in Belfast. Such a body would not have statutory force but would be a source of independent advice on the handling of key marches planned between now and the summer - when all-party talks are expected.

However, the RUC is pinning its hopes for a peaceful marching season on year-long, grassroots talks between nationalist and loyalist communities.

As police and politicians appealed for calm following Monday night's riots in Belfast, TURN TO PAGE 2

Mortgage rate cut to lowest for 31 years

NIC CICUTTI
and DIANE COYLE

Nationwide, the UK's second-largest building society, yesterday fired a further round in the mortgage price war by slashing the cost of its home loans to 6.74 per cent, the lowest rate since January 1965.

The reduction was immediately matched by Yorkshire Building Society, making the two societies the cheapest high street lenders in the market.

Nationwide and Yorkshire said the new rate, 0.25 per cent lower than before, would apply to both new and existing borrowers from 1 May. It brings down the monthly cost of a £60,000 endowment mortgage by almost £24.

Savings rates will also be cut by the same amount, but

Nationwide insisted its rates would remain competitive.

Nationwide's and Yorkshire's initiative is part of a growing division between societies which are determined to remain mutual, while most of their rivals have announced plans to float on the stockmarket.

Brian Davies, Nationwide's chief executive, said: "Our latest move ensures that both our savers and borrowers will continue to have a real competitive advantage, demonstrating, once again, that you really are better off with a building society."

Despite the Nationwide's announcement, the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, was yesterday urged by the Treasury's panel of independent forecasters, the six "wise persons", to be cautious about further reductions in the cost of borrowing.

The last time rates were this low...

- The average house cost £3,820, and the average weekly wage was around £16.
- The Rolling Stones had three No 1 singles while Roger Moore and Patrick McGeehan were the highest paid British actors on £2,000 a week.
- Ian Brady and Myra Hindley were charged with murder, and the death penalty was abolished.
- A two-week package holiday to the Costa del Sol would cost from £66 and to Greece from £93.
- British Rail published plans to cut the rail service in half, following the Beeching Report.

Although they welcomed recent base rate cuts, two said there was a case for increasing them, if the Government was serious about its inflation target. Another three thought the next move in rates would not necessarily be downwards.

Only one urged a reduction. Some City analysts argued the Chancellor could squeeze in another quarter-point cut to 5.75 per cent at the meeting between Mr Clarke and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, due on 8 May.

Most major lenders said yesterday they did not intend to cut their rates, which currently stand at about 7.25 per cent, at least £47 more a month on a £60,000 endowment mortgage than Nationwide.

Abbey National said: "We have no intention to move. We have already responded to the [official] base rate cut [to 6 per cent] when it was made last month."

Halifax, Woolwich, Barclays Bank and Alliance & Leicester also said they had no plans at present to follow suit.

Cheltenham & Gloucester, which was taken over by Lloyds Bank last year, will not cut the cost of its home loans below the 6.95 per cent it intends charging its 600,000 borrowers from 1 June, unless other major lenders do so first.

Nationwide's decision was hailed by experts as a further underpinning of the housing market's fragile recovery.

Don Smith, UK economist at HSBC Midland, said it "underlines the depth of competition there is in the mortgage market, and that can only be good for the housing market".

A new survey by TSB showed the cost of buying a home is the lowest for 18 years. A typical buyer now pays £25.70 towards a mortgage out of every £100 of take-home pay. Last summer, the amount was more than £30.

In February, Nationwide launched its first strike in the price war between the societies, when it gave its 7 million members members £200m in annual profits.

Woolwich row, page 15
Output sluggish, page 15

IN BRIEF

Galloping success
The BSE scare meant that trade was booming yesterday at one of the first horse-meat shops to open in Britain since the Second World War. Page 3

High cost of shyness
Impotent men are paying £1,000 for treatment available for little or no cost on the NHS, because they are too embarrassed to see their GPs. Page 3

Today's weather
Sunshine and showers in most areas. Section two, page 29

Troops hunt 'world's worst serial killer'

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

Troops have been rushed to a small village in the Ukraine to try to foil a serial murderer who has killed 40 out of the 1,500 villagers in three months.

Whole families in Bratkovichi, a hamlet near the Polish border, have been slaughtered by the killer who the authorities are now trying to stop with a division of national guards. Alexander Yevashchenko, of

the Ukrainian CID, said the murders were believed to be the work of one man. "It is the worst killer the Ukraine has ever seen, and may be the worst crime spree in history."

Andrei Chikatilo, the Rostov Ripper executed in 1994, had previously held that title with 52 child victims murdered over 17 years. The "Beast of Bratkovichi" has only been active since December.

The death toll is so high because the killer targets entire

families. "He breaks into houses early in the morning, shoots all the inhabitants, including the children, and then sets the house on fire," said Insp Yevashchenko.

The killer first struck on 30 December when he murdered a family of four in their beds and then killed a passer-by who evidently saw him fleeing. In his latest attack he shot another family of four - a man, his wife, their daughter and the wife's disabled sister. The murderer

has not sexually assaulted any of his victims and police are puzzled as to his motive.

Over 100 investigators are working on the case and troops have been sent in to calm the population. In addition, street lights and telephones have been installed in the hamlet which, like most rural settlements in the former Soviet Union, was scarcely living in the 20th century until the killings started.

In Soviet times, the Communist-controlled press only

reported crime news from the West. This lack of Glasnost was one reason why Chikatilo was able to kill for so long around the southern Russian city of Rostov - the public was left in ignorance and the police were unable to appeal for witnesses.

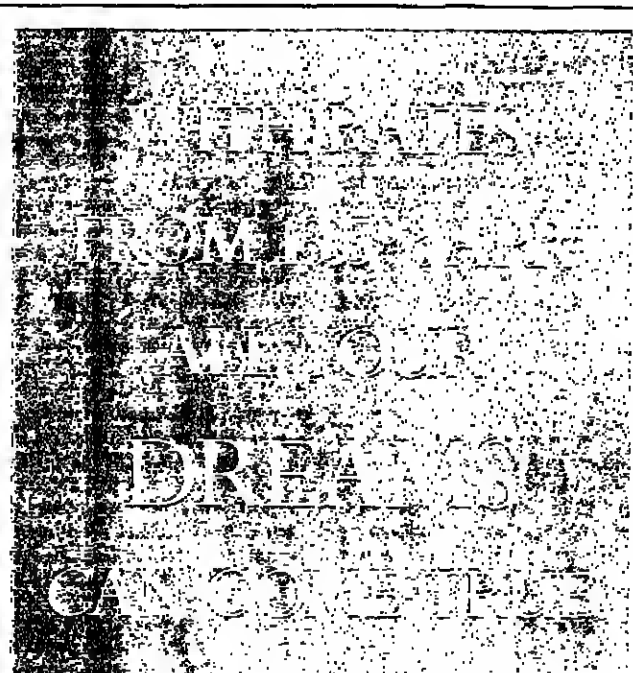


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news

'Street' cruises for fall over video's brief honeymoon

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The makers of the ITV soap opera *Coronation Street* could face heavy fines for showing the honeymoon of two of its biggest stars on television - after promoting it as exclusively for sale on video.

The Independent Television Commission has launched an investigation after it received complaints from 70 viewers about Granada's decision to screen the 75-minute special on

the honeymoon of characters Raquel and Curly on ITV after it had promoted it as exclusive to video for £13.99. Granada has also received letters from several hundreds of viewers at its Manchester studios demanding an explanation.

Some 750,000 people bought *Coronation Street - the Cruise on video*, making Granada an estimated £10m. But many say they only did so because they were led to believe it would never be shown on television.

In fact less than four months

after it went on sale in December a shortened version was shown on ITV on 24 March.

More than 16 million viewers watched Raquel and Curly's antics as they joined a luxury cruise only to discover that they had no tickets and could not even share a bedroom.

Three other *Coronation Street* stars also featured in the special: Alex Gilroy, Mavis Wilton and Rita Sullivan.

Yesterday an ITC spokeswoman said that following Granada's announcement that

it would be on the nation's television screens last month they had been inundated with complaints.

"We've had around 70 complaints from viewers who bought the video on the understanding that it was exclusive to video and then a version was shown on TV," she said.

"We have asked Granada for an explanation and we are awaiting their response."

What viewers perceive as the cruise "con" has been worsened by ITV claims that Granada

had known all along it would be shown on television but cold-bloodedly gave the opposite impression to maximise profits. One source said: "This is the consequence of their drive to push up profits. They are getting greedy."

A Granada spokesman admitted that it had always planned to put the honeymoon episode on television, and had deliberately removed the pre-printed sticker saying "Only on video" after the television

showing.

But he denied that buyers of the extended episode had been misled. "It's grossly misleading to extrapolate from the 70 complaints the ITC claims to have received as being representative of the three quarters of a million people who bought and enjoyed the video," he warned.

"Initially it was made available exclusively on video and we had an agreement with ITV to make a version available to them once a suitable period had elapsed. The video enabled viewers to see the honeymoon

immediately following the episode showing the wedding."

The row on the 35th anniversary of Britain's best-loved soap opera reflects Granada's increasingly commercial approach to ITV's "jewel in the crown".

Last month it announced a £10m sponsorship deal with Cadbury's for the show and it also offers lucrative studio tours, books and a magazine linked to the programme and even the World of *Coronation Street*, in Blackpool.

BBC Arabic TV closure revives censorship fears

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The BBC was last night accused of a "sneering and racist attack on Islamic law and culture" as a bitter row erupted over the cancellation of the corporation's Arabic language television service.

The row looked certain to revive concerns about the BBC's relationships with outside broadcasters in the developing world, which many believe lead inevitably to threats of censorship.

Orbit, owned by the Mawarid Group of Saudi Arabia, which had been providing the service to its subscribers in the Middle East, north Africa and Europe, said it had "unilaterally terminated" its contract with the BBC, following what it claimed were "many attempts to persuade the BBC to be more sensitive".

The BBC stood by its statement made on Monday that both parties "had given notice of their intention" to terminate the service, and that the two were seeking an agreed settlement of "outstanding matters". These were believed to include financial arrangements.

A spokesman added last night: "The BBC does not propose to discuss the legal issues whilst negotiations are taking place and possible legal pro-

ceedings are pending."

The controversial 10-year contract, worth about £10m a year to the BBC, was fully financed by Orbit, although the service was produced by the BBC out of its studios in London, involving 250 staff.

The BBC said yesterday it would endeavour to find other jobs for the employees, but conceded that would be difficult given the "specialised" skills of the staff involved.

The confidential contract, signed two years ago, gave the BBC editorial control, Orbit said, but only provided "cultural sensitivities" were observed. Orbit claimed that the BBC had promised to edit the programme prior to transmission. "This it did not do," Orbit said in its statement.

The BBC said it was "satisfied that it has complied fully with all the terms of its contract, including its obligations as to local sensitivities."

The BBC transmission on 4 April of a *Panorama* programme entitled "Death of a Principle" which was highly critical of Saudi Arabia's human rights record, led to the decision to terminate. Alexander Zilo, Orbit's president, said yesterday. "Commenting on the *Panorama* programme, the company said the producers had "assembled isolated incidents and interviews, many with admitted

feloins, to allege improprieties in the application of Islamic law. The tabloid and sensationalist representation triggered outrage in the Islamic communities of Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa."

The BBC's arrangements with Orbit were unlike those it has established with other broadcasters, a BBC spokesman said. Generally, BBC Worldwide, the corporation's commercial arm, has packaged its news, entertainment and current affairs programming for broadcast outside the UK, in co-operation with private sector partners.

In the case of the Arabic service, the BBC produced original programming for a single client, supplementing this with programmes such as *Panorama*.

The BBC's use of outside broadcasters has already generated instances of censorship in overseas markets, critics allege. In Bahrain, last week's *Panorama* programme was twice scheduled to run on the state-owned main network, but was hacked out both times and replaced by announcements that there had been technical difficulties.

Star TV, controlled by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, bowed to pressure from the Chinese government and removed the BBC World Service from its service in China.

Loonylugs candidate on wrong side of the law



Tony Samuelson, 66, a Daily Loonylugs Party candidate at the Staffordshire South East by-election, is arrested by police after scuffles broke out during a visit to Tamworth by Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary. He had earlier tried to address Mrs Bottomley through loudspeakers and was later released without charge. Photograph: PA

Blair says by-election defeat may force Major to the polls

COLIN BROWN

An early general election could be forced on John Major by a Tory defeat in the Staffordshire South East by-election tomorrow, the Labour leader, Tony Blair, said last night as his party prepared for a resounding victory.

The loss of the Conservative seat would reduce Mr Major's majority in the Commons to one. This would make it more difficult for the Prime Minister to stay in office until a general election in May next year at the end of the Government's full five-year term. Mr Blair told a by-election meeting in Tamworth.

Previous by-election losses have been wiped out by the Tories at subsequent general elections. But both sides see the Staffordshire South East result as a key indicator.

Mr Blair said: "A Labour win will show there are no no-go areas for New Labour. The Tories know this. They are ter-

rified of losing this seat. If we win here, they will not be able to dismiss defeat as mid-term blues or a protest vote."

"They know that if we win here, it will be the clearest sign yet that we are back as the party of the mainstream majority; that people are not just voting against the Government, but voting for an opposition that is credible, realistic and can give this country the fresh start it is crying out for."

One clear message emerging for Mr Major is that he should carry out a summer reshuffle of his Cabinet team, albeit reluctantly. Conservative "focus" group polling in Tamworth has shown that voters regard the Government as "tired".

Two ministers, David Curry and David Maclean, are tipped for promotion to the Cabinet and there has been speculation that the party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, who has seen the polling results, wants Mr Major to drop Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary,

who was campaigning in Tamworth yesterday.

The Tories believe the by-election result could mark a turning point in their fortunes. Privately, they are already admitting defeat, in spite of the upbeat remarks last week in the seat by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor. He predicted that Jimmy James, the Tory candidate, would be the first recipient of the "feelgood factor".

But private polling has given the Tories hope that the disenfranchised voters can be won back. "The venom has gone. There has been a real change of mood," said one senior party campaign source.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine - the fifteenth cabinet minister to campaign for the seat - last night appealed directly to wavering Tory voters to return to the fold.

The Tories also claim their polling, from a sample of voters in Tamworth, showed deep scepticism and the threat of a backlash against Mr Blair.

"They say that he won't last very long after the election, that the Left will stick the knife in his back if they get in office," said the campaign source.

But the Tory sample polling also shows that Mr Major is highly vulnerable to the charge of betrayal by former voters for tax increases since 1992.

Mr Blair last night scoffed at a Tory briefing which claimed that a defeat by 5,000 votes would be a good result in a seat where they are defending a majority of 7,192 following the death of Sir David Lightbown.

The opposition leader stressed the importance Labour places on winning the seat by cutting short a family holiday in Spain to hold the ticket-only meeting in Tamworth before flying to Washington today for a visit which will include talks with President Clinton.

Mr Major has been spending the Easter break in his Huntingdon constituency.

Move to halt lottery child ticket sales

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Children are illegally buying lottery tickets and scratchcards without fear of being caught because of confusion over who is responsible for policing the crime, it emerged yesterday.

A new investigation and prosecution policy is being drawn up by the Home Office, the police, trading standards, and Camelot, the National Lottery operator, in an attempt to solve the problem.

The move follows the police's refusal to use their resources on staking out shops or checking youngsters for buying tickets under the legal limit of 16. Any retailer who knowingly sells a ticket to a under-age player faces a £5,000 fine or up to two years in jail.

The Chief Constable's Council, the main ratifying body of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), is expected to agree to a three-point holding plan today until a new policy can be drawn up.

The council is likely to agree that the police will not actively attempt to catch under-aged offenders but any offences that are reported to them will be passed on to Camelot who will decide what action should be taken

against the retailer. The police will continue to deal with the more serious crimes such as fraud, theft and deception.

An ACPO spokesman said: "There seems to be an assumption by the Department of National Heritage that it was up to the police to refer cases of newsgirls selling tickets to under aged kids to the Crown Prosecution Service. We believe it should be up to local authority trading standard officers. We are currently discussing a prosecution policy."

The problem of under aged youngsters was highlighted in November when a 15-year-old bought a winning scratchcard. Camelot is taking Prudence Beech to court over the £10,000 her son, Clayton, from Scholar Green, Cheshire, won.

The company wants the High Court to establish that children may not buy instant scratchcards. The CPS decided not to take any criminal action after his mother collected his winnings.

A spokeswoman for the heritage department said: "Trading standards and the police have to take forward prosecutions of retailers that sell tickets to people under aged. There seems to be some confusion from both sides and attempts are being made to clarify the rules."

Labour in move to sweeten Murdoch

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Questions to Rupert Murdoch are expected to be made next week by Labour with a move to a more free market approach to cross-media ownership.

The Labour front-bench trade and industry team is preparing to abandon its support for a tough regulatory regime on the ownership of newspapers and television broadcasting in favour of a freer market overseen by the Monopolies & Mergers Commission with tougher powers.

The commission, under Labour, would be expected as a result to approve more investments by newspapers and broadcasting companies in cross-media ownership.

The first step will come next week in the Commons with the Second Reading of the Broadcasting Bill in which the Government is proposing to stop newspaper groups with more than 20 per cent of the national market taking over independent television companies.

Labour would prefer the threshold to be 25 per cent. Senior Labour sources said last night that this would benefit the Mirror Group, part owners of the *Independent*.

Thief, 12, clubs man with iron bar

A 61-year-old man was recovering in hospital last night being clubbed over the head with an iron bar by a 12-year-old thief.

Bob Williams, of Wombwell, Barnsley in South Yorkshire, was attacked after hearing noises in his garden on Saturday. He went outside to discover two

boys, aged about 12 and 15, coming out of his garden shed.

Mr Williams, who is retired, tried to catch the older boy but was hit over the head with an iron bar by the 12-year-old, who was just 4ft 10in tall. The two boys, who had picked up the weapon in the garden, then fled.

Mr Williams suffered a severe head injury and was taken to Barnsley District General Hospital.

Sergeant Steve Boulton, of Wombwell police, said yesterday: "It's disgusting that children as young as 12 can commit these types of offences. Particularly when you hear in mind

the fact that two elderly men have died this weekend after similar attacks."

"This could obviously be far more serious and this young lad could have been facing a murder charge."

Detectives were hoping to take a fuller statement from hope Mr Williams yesterday.

IN BRIEF

School massacre gym demolished

Work begins today on demolishing the school gym where 16 children and their teacher were massacred by a gunman last month. Bereaved parents of the Dunblane primary school children, most of whom were aged five, had the final say in deciding it should be pulled down.

The work will be completed well before pupils return on Monday from their Easter holiday. Meanwhile the Dunblane inquiry chaired by the leading Scottish judge Lord Cullen will hold a preliminary hearing in Stirling on 1 May.

This will deal with procedural issues ahead of the full inquiry, which is likely to start in late May or early June and last about four weeks.

Police chief retires

Sir Ron Hadfield, 56, is to retire in July as Chief Constable of the West Midlands. Sir Ron was appointed to the post in 1990 after the area's controversial Serious Crime Squad had been disbanded in disgrace. He quickly initiated a major restructuring of the force, which is the second largest in England and Wales.

Exodus from pews

Congregations in Wales are dwindling by four per cent a year, according to a church survey. The number of young worshippers has fallen from 27 per cent of children to six per cent in 14 years. But Wales still has a church for every 600 people - double that found in England and Scotland.

Baby found dead

Children playing on wasteland behind a community centre, found the body of a newborn baby boy. Police in Dudley, West Midlands, said they believed the body of the full-term white baby boy may have been lying in undergrowth for at least 24 hours. They are anxious to contact his mother.

Benefit strike vote

Benefits Agency staff in five London offices have voted for a five-day strike from next Monday over work on the planned Job Seekers Allowance. Some work on the JSA is expected to be carried out in Job Centres without security screens, which unions say puts staff at the risk of assault.

Phone-in offensive

Piccadilly Gold radio station in Manchester was fined £1,000 over remarks about the Pope in a late night phone-in. The live discussion last December about the Catholic Church's stance on sexual matters offended good taste and decency and also abused Catholic sensitivities, the Radio Authority ruled.

Profits climbing

Hillwalking and mountaineering came up to £10m a year for businesses in the Scottish highlands and have created nearly 4,000 new jobs, according to a report commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. More than 500,000 people took to the Scottish hills last year - one per cent of the UK's adult population.

Ex-editor dies

Peter Hollinson, the former editor of *Wales On Sunday*, has died after a long battle with cancer. He joined the newspaper as assistant editor when the title was launched in 1989 and was appointed editor in 1991. Mr Hollinson was 50 and married with two daughters.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	£5.40	Norway	£5.00
Belgium	£5.80	Italy	£4.50
Canada	£6.30	Malta	£3.25
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Ulster calm returns

FROM PAGE 1

small groups of people from both sides of the divide have been trying to avert trouble by reaching compromises over the routes and frequencies of the marches.

With more than 2,500 parades due to take place by the end of the year, the potential for trouble is great.

However, one RUC officer said yesterday: "We are hoping that the community negotiations will reach settlements acceptable by both sides."

"Behind the scenes, and in spite of all the shouting since

Monday, negotiations at local level have been taking place aimed at finding some compromises. We are not initiating these talks, but we have been invited by the communities to attend."

Last year, the nationalist Ormeau Road was one of the routes along which tension was greatest.

However, serious violence was averted by talks between a nationalist residents' organisation and loyalist marchers who negotiated a reduction in the number of parades from 12 to just two.

APR 10 1996

Meat market: Consumers break British taboo over eating much-loved animals as beef crisis is prolonged by policy delays

Cheap cuts help horse draw in customers

REBECCA FOWLER

The customers were hesitant, and certainly did not wish to know the former name of their prospective dinners. But trade was booming yesterday at one of the first horse meat shops to open in Britain since the war.

A steady flow of shoppers stopped at Cheval Butchers in Smetwick in West Midlands yesterday, where cuts of horse meat were on sale from 20 to 80p a pound. "Can you afford to miss it?" the sign read.

Bob Walker, 47, the owner, who worked in horse slaughtering for 30 years, is delighted by the initial response. He believes the horse's day has come, in the light of cheaper prices and the beef scare.

His counter was filled with one quarter of a hunting horse. The animal, which he refused to name, was shot after it broke its leg. It weighed 1,060lb and will provide one week's sales.

Mr Walker said: "I didn't think it would go this well, and I was expecting to see animal rights protesters this morning, but there weren't any. If it carries on like this I'll be very happy."

The meat, which is similar to beef, but tougher and sweeter, is popular on the Continent. The cheaper cuts are popular with greyhound and pet owners, according to Mr Walker, who expects trade from them.

But locals from around Smetwick are also keen to experiment. One nervous customer peered at the counter of dark red meat: "Oh, I don't know, I just don't know," said Laurie Cox, 65, a housewife.

Mrs Cox eventually bought a pound of steak at a bargain price of 50p which she intended to slow roast. "I just want to try it, and if I like it I'll be back."

Other customers who had al-

ready eaten horse meat abroad said they were not squeamish about eating an animal traditionally held in such high affection by the British.

Hayden Corps, 30, a freelance lighting technician, bought 3lb of horsemeat for £3.50, which he said he would try frying. "The English attitude to horses is that they're for sitting on and playing with, but I don't like them very much," he said.

"I've eaten horse meat many times abroad, in France, Spain, Russia, Mongolia. I've never liked beef because of the feeding practices, but I'm not aware they're giving horses to horses."

Mr Walker is confident his meat supply will not run out. He used to charge £70 for taking dead animals to the knacker's yard. But in return for a vet's certificate that confirms the horse is fit for consumption, he will now remove it for £30 or even free, to sell the meat.

As customers continued to inspect his counter in the red-brick Tollgate market, Mr Walker took further inquiries by telephone. He has received a number of calls from restaurants, and one chef bought £10 worth of horse's meat yesterday.

But for most customers the biggest attraction was the low price. The Ryder family had travelled 20 miles from Nuneaton yesterday to buy a sample of horse meat.

Rob Ryder, 39, a glass fibre manufacturer, said his wife Pauline, 39, had been reluctant, but their son David, 12, was enthusiastic.

Mr Ryder said: "If it moves we'll eat it. We've tried it abroad and it's a bit adventurous cooking it at home. You're either a vegetarian or you're not. How many people eating a pork chop think about the poor little piggy?"



Horse trading: A prospective customer at Cheval Butchers in Smetwick, West Midlands Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Take a sprig of parsley: How to cook horse

Ingredients: 10 chicken wings, 10 chicken thighs, 10 chicken breasts, 10 chicken legs, 10 chicken drumsticks, 10 chicken wings, 10 chicken thighs, 10 chicken breasts, 10 chicken legs, 10 chicken drumsticks. **Method:** 1. Wash and dry the meat. 2. Season with salt and pepper. 3. Cook in a preheated oven at 180°C for 20 minutes. 4. Serve with a sprig of parsley.

Farmers cull herds they cannot afford

ROS WYNNE-JONES and CHARLES ARTHUR

The BSE crisis is forcing some farmers to cull their own herds because they cannot afford to keep feeding older cows while the Government organises widespread destruction and compensation programmes.

Meanwhile, British attempts to lift the global ban on British beef look certain to be rejected today when European veterinary experts meet in Brussels to assess the continuing crisis.

The culling of older cows began last week, after the sale of cows and beef cattle older than 30 months for beef was outlawed. This has left farmers who previously sold dairy cattle past milk-production as cheap beef with the cost of keeping the animals. On average, it costs £30 to feed one dairy cow for a week.

"I know of several dairy farmers who have been forced to have their cows shot, but it will spread across the country," said Philip Stephens, chairman of the National Farmers' Union Cornwall branch. "The Government has outlawed cow beef, but the instruments for the slaughter of these cows are not in place and there is no guarantee of compensation. What are farmers meant to do when it is costing them so much to feed them?"

The cows, also known as cull cattle, fetched about £200 before the British beef scare, but were now virtually worthless, he said.

A spokesman for the NFU's South-west region said the union had not heard of farmers shooting their own herds. The regional office, in Exeter, had been receiving up to 400 calls per day, however, many from anxious dairy farmers.

Callers had been asking what to do with their herds, because they were unable to get rid of them, the spokesman said. Cull cattle had never formed a large part of a dairy farmer's income, but the loss of £200 per cow might tip some farmers

over the edge. "No-one seems to be giving them any answers, least of all the politicians."

Beef farmers with older cattle have also been feeling the effects of the BSE scare.

Norman Morish, a beef farmer from Cheriton Bishop, Devon, said he had 25 prime beef cattle which would have been worth about £24,000, but now they could not be sold because they were more than 30 months old. "We do not know what is going to happen. But we have got to hold on to them and feed them, and hope something comes up at the end of the day," Mr Morish said.

Meanwhile, the pressure group Friends of the Earth claimed that water supplies for Norwich might be contaminated by material leaching from the headless carcasses of 100 BSE-infected cattle buried at a landfill site. The site is roughly half a mile from the River Wensum, which is used to supply water to the city.

But Anglian Water and the Environment Agency, which is responsible for water quality, insisted yesterday that there is no leaching from the site. "We have boreholes which are checked at least once a month," said an Environment Agency spokeswoman.

The EU's standing veterinary committee, which meets in Brussels today, may decide to a slight relaxation of the ban on British beef by agreeing to remove certain beef-related products, such as gelatine, from the scope of the order, according to officials.

The meeting has been called by the European Commission, which agreed to review the terms of the ban, which it imposed on British beef and all beef-related products on March 27. However, sources in the Commission said it was far too early to consider any lifting of the order. Although Keith McDermott, Britain's chief veterinary officer, may call again for the end of the blockade, the chances of this happening were "zero", said one official.

Impotent pay £1,000 for £9.95 cure

GLENDA COOPER

Impotent men are paying more than £1,000 for treatment that could be available for little or no cost on the National Health Service, because they are too embarrassed to see their GPs, it was claimed yesterday.

Vulnerable men — many of whom keep their erection problems from their partners — are falling victim to slick salesmen from private clinics and are paying vastly inflated prices, according to a report in *Health Watch* magazine.

The five London clinics investigated charged between £360 and £1,300 for treatment, one claiming to use the most "advanced substance" to bring about a natural erection.

In fact, the substance used is alprostadil sold as Caverject, which is a standard treatment used by most clinics and costs the NHS about £9.95 per injection.

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Sales pitch: Adverts tempt men to seek private treatment

able free on the NHS but there are relatively few NHS impotence clinics. Sufferers should get their GP to identify the cause of their problem, whether physical or psychological.

If the doctor feels it is treatable by injection, the patient should ask for an appointment with the urology department at his local hospital which will work out the dosage needed and show the patient how to inject himself. After that the injection

is the price of a prescription. The deputy editor of the Consumers' Association's *Health Watch*, Robert Ashton, said: "This is an incredibly sensitive subject and men want to keep it private. Often they will see advertisements in magazines that promise a simple and easy solution or painless and advanced treatment. They phone up and get an incredibly slick salesman on the other end and they are hooked."

Even if they feel that they have been overcharged, he added, most are too embarrassed to complain. Mr Ashton said it was "ludicrous" that sufferers could pay £1,300 for a treatment that could be administered at home for the price of a prescription.

However, Clive Gingell, consultant urologist at Southmead Hospital, Bristol, warned that there could be a wait of up to a year for NHS treatment.

"Waiting times are such a common problem that many people choose to go private," he said. "People are aware of the treatment options and may feel the waiting times are too long. And not all urology departments can provide this service... small departments do not have the manpower to see such patients."

Dr Gingell called for GPs to be trained to administer the injections: "It would cut out the necessity of referring. I don't see why GPs should not be able to do the treatment themselves."

Skier's 900ft death plunge

A British skier who died after falling nearly 900 feet in the French Alps was a keen sports woman who "lived life to the full", neighbours said yesterday. Nottingham-born Ceiven Faulkner, 32, who lived in London, was skiing off-piste at 6,800ft when the accident happened.

She slipped as a guide was taking her, husband Peter and three other skiers down a treacherous mountain path in the Meije region of the Alps, near the French resort of La Grave.

"The woman must have been a good skier because the accident happened in a very dangerous area — off-piste and high on a glacier full of crevasses," said a mountain rescue worker in La Grave.

Antoine Sullivan, who lives next door to the house in Highbury, north London, where the Faulkners have lived for about 10 years, described them as "a very friendly and happy couple".

He added: "They were wonderful people, very active and

sporty. They were always off on some holiday or another — skiing, scuba diving and tennis." His wife, Christine, said: "They lived life to the full, a young couple with no children — they just thought why not make the most of life?"

Skiers are always advised to take a guide and not to stray off course if they wish to venture to the spot where Mrs Faulkner died.

The area is notorious for accidents and a rescue worker said: "Every season we have several bad accidents up there. It's inevitable. Thick snow gives way to ice and unexpected drops. Even in good weather skiers are at great risk."

He said Monday's accident happened in ideal conditions — sunny weather and plenty of snow.

Two mountain rescue workers took the body off the mountain by helicopter and they counselled Mr Faulkner after he had formally identified his wife.

An inquiry has been opened into the accident by the French authorities.

Cookery queen is out of flavour

The popular food writer Delia Smith has been snubbed by the foodie "Oscars". Neither her best-selling book *Delia Smith's Winter Collection*, nor the BBC television programme of the same name have been short-listed by the prestigious Gifford Awards.

The *Winter Collection* book broke all records, selling 1.7 million in just weeks and topping the sales charts at the end of last year. That and Delia Smith's other cookery books made her £3m in royalties last year alone. But the queen of kitchen

cookery books does not feature in the Gifford shortlist. Instead, the judges including humorist Alan Coren, Sainsbury's off-licence director Allan Cheesman, and restaurateur Jeremy King plumped for more obscure "foodie" names for the awards, to be given on 17 April.

Food books shortlisted are *The Classic Food of Northern Italy*, by Anna Del Conte; *The River Café Cook Book*, by Ruth Rogers and Rose Gray; *The Modern Cook's Manual*, by Lynda Brown and *A Provencal Table*, by Richard Olney.

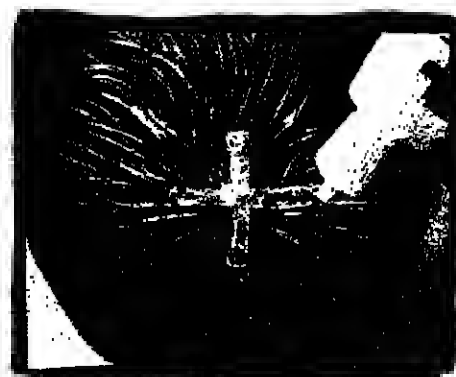
The television programmes were *Slice Of Life*, Janis Robinson's *Wine Course* and Rick Stein's *Taste Of The Sea*, all shown on BBC Television.

A spokeswoman for Gifford said: "We like to think of ourselves as the Oscars of the food and drink writing world. Delia Smith won a special award last year for services to the world of food writing."

"But she has not been nominated this year, and that is really down to the judges, who change every year."



Delia Smith: Off the menu



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news

Education conferences: Union demands return to methods of 15 years ago to cope with disruptive children

'Schools cannot cope with violent pupils'

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Violent pupils should be removed from classrooms by reopening special schools which have been closed in the past 15 years, a teachers' union conference was told yesterday.

Disruption had escalated so far that some pupils arriving at nursery on their first day were out of control and could not be taught, the union's leader said. More than 300 special schools have closed since 1979 under a policy of increased integration. The Warnock Report on special educational needs, which was backed up by legislation in 1981, called for such pupils to be brought back into mainstream education rather than being kept apart.

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers conference, in Glasgow, was told the move had placed intolerable strain on teachers.

Chris Keates, a member of the union's executive, said that



Nigel de Gruchy: 'Real world'

neither teachers, the children concerned nor the other pupils benefited.

Schools did not have the resources to deal with the problems and were often unable to provide enough specialist help for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Local authorities which had closed special schools, reducing their numbers from 1,600 in 1979 to less than 1,300, were often trying to cut costs, she said. Units for disturbed children

in mainstream schools were fraught with difficulties, she said. Decisions on which children to admit might be taken out of a school's hands, the pupils might cause problems at break times and it might be difficult to exclude them if they were impossible to handle.

Large classes, under-funding and a surfeit of government initiatives had made it impossible for mainstream schools to cope, she added. "Advocating support and specialist provision is out about abandoning children. It is about recognising the very special needs these pupils have and establishing the most appropriate provision to address both needs," she said.

Bob Ball, a delegate from Hampshire, said that his county had recently had a school ruled failing by inspectors. One-third of the pupils taking GCSE the previous year had been excluded from other schools in the county. "What chance did the teachers in that school stand? Those pupils should not have been there," he said.

A motion to the conference, likely to be passed today, calls for the union to oppose the concept of "inclusive" education.

Nigel de Gruchy, the union's general secretary, said schools could not be blamed when children who arrived for their first day at nursery school beat up fellow pupils and refused to take any notice of their teachers. These children must be excluded, he said. "Schools are not social institutions, they are being forced to adopt a role they simply cannot cope with."

Teachers and pupils at a school in Bedfordshire were horrified to find live maggots falling from the classroom ceiling on to their heads, the conference was told.

Pigeons had become trapped in the roof at Ashton Middle school in Dunstable and had died there, said Ray Mellor, a secondary teacher. The incident two years ago highlighted the need for school building regulations which had been dropped by the Government, he said.



Fringe activity: Activists handing out leaflets outside the NUT conference Photograph: Huw Evans

McAvoy issues warning to far-left activists

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Far-left delegates who defeated proposals for greater union democracy may be reported to the ordinary members they represent, a teachers' leader warned yesterday.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, warned the union's annual conference that he would press on with plans for one-member one-vote which were supported by more than 80 per cent of ordinary members in a ballot. Outside the conference he said that details of delegates' voting might be sent to the union's local associations.

In his speech to the Cardiff conference, he said: "I believe that our members' faith in the union will transcend the adverse publicity that this rejection has attracted. The voice of the members will be heard and they will insist that their union listens to their views."

He said the union would forfeit any influence it might have over a new Labour government or the parties' election manifestos unless they got to grips with reality. "If we appear obdurate and devoid of any willingness to consider new ideas then we will forfeit any right to influence the actions of the next government."

He argued for a new body to represent all six teachers' unions which would be created after two or more of them had agreed to dissolve. Those who had spoken against unity in conference feared that their policies would not be acceptable in a larger body. "The logic of that assertion is that they are not representative of the vast majority of teachers," he said.

He attacked the Government, which he described as "the most unpopular in history", and which he said was trying to dismantle comprehensive education. And he defended teachers against the assertion by Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, that 15,000 teachers should be sacked. "The union does not accept that this wild claim has any foundation in fact. The truth is that teachers are not failing their pupils. It is the Government that is failing the nation, the children and teachers."

Will Reese from Coventry, a member of the Socialist Teachers' Alliance, said the debate on union democracy had been a diversion and must be put behind them. The union must unite around the policies adopted by the conference.

Delegates passed a motion threatening local strikes if any teachers lose jobs or suffer worse working conditions because of the nursery voucher scheme. They fear some teachers in state nursery schools may be made redundant if the scheme leads to a big expansion of private nursery schools.

Rank and file moderates keep the militants at bay

As left-wing delegates from the National Union of Teachers conference head home in triumph, parents may be wondering whether a new wave of militancy is about to sweep classrooms. It is not.

The defeat of the leadership's plans for one-member one-vote - designed to wrest control from the far left - will make little or no difference to the lives of pupils or the vast majority of those who teach them.

The union's leadership remains in the hands of an executive where moderates are in a majority and they have shown before how easily conference decisions can be ignored.

The fact that delegates voted against the plan to get all conference decisions ratified by the membership will make no difference. Last year, conference voted for a one-day strike over big classes. The executive simply balloted the membership which voted no to a strike by a large majority and nothing happened. It also adopted its own salaries strategy and put in a joint pay submission with other unions against the wishes of conference.

The fate of the motion passed this year saying that members will walk out if teachers are sacked after receiving a bad report from inspectors is likely to be similar. The chance of nursery school teachers abandoning classes of three and four-year-olds is remote even if teachers do lose their jobs as a result of the voucher scheme.

Given the Government's difficulties in attracting new private operators, this one is a far-distant prospect.

Delegates ran out of time before they reached a motion urging a boycott of tests for 11-year-olds to stop league tables but it would not have happened. The majority of delegates are now so divorced from most of the union's ordinary members that they seem to be moving in a fantasy world.

The reason for this, as speaker after speaker reminded the conference in the debates on union democracy, is that most teachers no longer have the time nor the inclination to turn up at the local branch meetings which pick delegates. Meetings which used to attract dozens, have difficulty mustering a quorum.

There are three political groups on the left who joined together to defeat the more moderate executive. The executive has 23 members, 21 from the moderate broad left and 19 from the three far-left groups.

There are two uncommitted members who are unlikely to back the far left. This year's president is Carole Regan, a member of the Socialist Teachers' Alliance, which includes Militant and other groups on the left of the Labour Party.

One of the speakers who opposed the changes to the union rules on democracy argued that if the changes were passed the conference would no longer matter. Others might say that it does not matter anyway.

Judith Judd

Analysis

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Judith Judd

Police investigate cannabis club

A new club which opens today and offers prospective members the chance to taste "cannabis food" is to be investigated by the police.

The Cannabis Hemp Information Club (CHIC), based at "The House of Hemp" in Redchurch Street, East London, includes a museum and information centre.

A press release reveals the chance for members to "view the exhibition and sample a se-

lection of cannabis foods". Drug-runner Howard Marks, sentenced to 25 years in a US jail in 1988 for smuggling marijuana and released last year, is billed as a special guest.

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said: "We are aware of the club and will be making further inquiries to establish whether any criminal offence has taken place." But Rob Christopher, the CHIC director, said: "There is nothing illegal in

the food. I have a Home Office licence to grow cannabis for the seed, which is the most nutritious food known to man."

"It does not give you a high, and for the opening we are offering hemp cake, hemp bagels and other confectionery. No-one will be smoking joints."

Mr Christopher said the aim was to educate people about the benefits of cannabis and to dismiss the "myth" about the drug.

"It can be used for clothing, in

pharmaceuticals, as an environmentally friendly fuel and in food," he added.

Mr Christopher hopes to enlist the support of prominent individuals in campaigning for the legalisation of cannabis. "I am organising a National Turn Yourself In Day on 14 September when everyone across the country will show how unworkable the law is by going to police stations and admitting to smoking pot."

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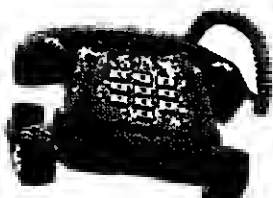
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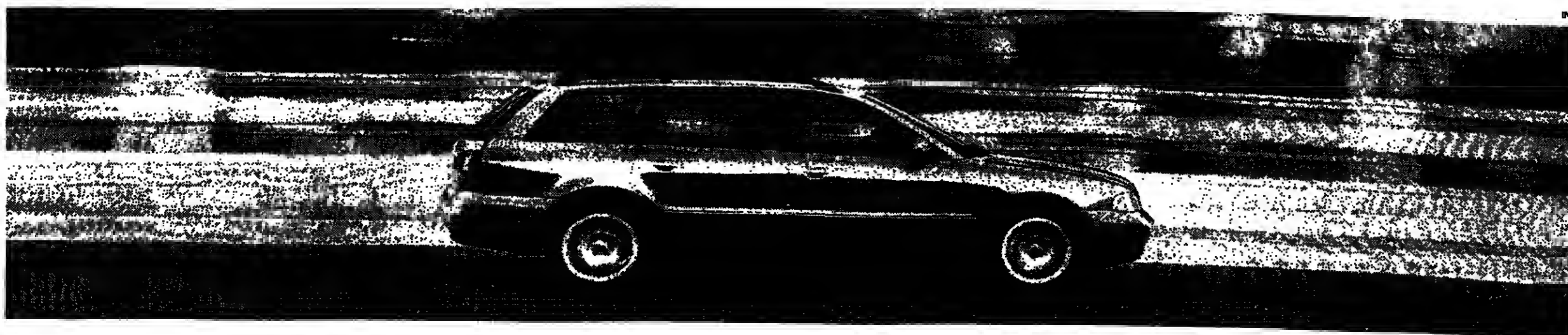
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APR 10 1996

Clinics' lines jammed over faulty HIV test

LOUISE JURY

Hospitals and clinics reopening after Easter were besieged with thousands of callers yesterday anxious to check whether they had been given the wrong HIV test results. The wait for information began on Friday with leaked news of a faulty HIV testing procedure.

Figures from the test manufacturer, Abbott Laboratories, revealed they have so far found four positive results which falsely tested negative in more than 25 million tests world-wide, including one in Britain.

The Chicago-based company, which has a British office in Maidenhead, Berkshire, suspended distribution of the IMx HIV test on 25 March when the problem emerged and contacted the Department of Health four days later.

Clinics received details from Abbott Laboratories at the end of last week.

But as doctors and counsellors reported difficulties in reassuring many callers yesterday, there were criticisms that the Department of Health should have acted sooner. It planned to make an announcement this week.

A spokeswoman said: "We have been talking to people and trying to set up helplines and counselling. We hope to issue guidance to health authorities

and trusts shortly and certainly by the middle of the week."

However, discussions were not held with Aids charities. A Terrence Higgins Trust spokesman said: "It is right to co-ordinate a response to news like this. But ... it does seem to have taken a very long time for a co-ordinated response to happen."

Derek Bodel, National Aids Trust director, said the manner in which the problem emerged put an onus on the Department of Health to act speedily in future. "There needs to be a complete review of how these announcements are handled."

David Free, sexual health services manager for Guy's and St Thomas's Hospitals in London, said they realised the potential for a scare as soon as they learnt of the fault from the manufacturers last Thursday.

Switchboard and casualty staff were briefed to answer queries during the weekend. Genito-urinary clinics reopened yesterday, with the first calls coming at 8am and reaching 20 an hour. A handful of patients arrived in person.

Mr Free said the distress caused by the incident had been considerable. People who took a test because of sexual abuse or rape were reliving the experience. In some instances, the alert had alarmed couples who had taken the test before trying for a baby.

In one case, a caller who had been unfaithful some time earlier was having to face again the worries of whether to tell a partner and children if the test proved positive.

"Because HIV is such a serious diagnosis, it's very hard to tell people they are probably all right. People want to know definitely," he said.

He feared the scare would dent public confidence in HIV tests and hoped that, in future, any news would be released to coincide with clinic opening hours.

Robert Passas, scientific affairs manager for Abbott Laboratories, said they were evaluating the test and hoped to have an improved version available by next month.

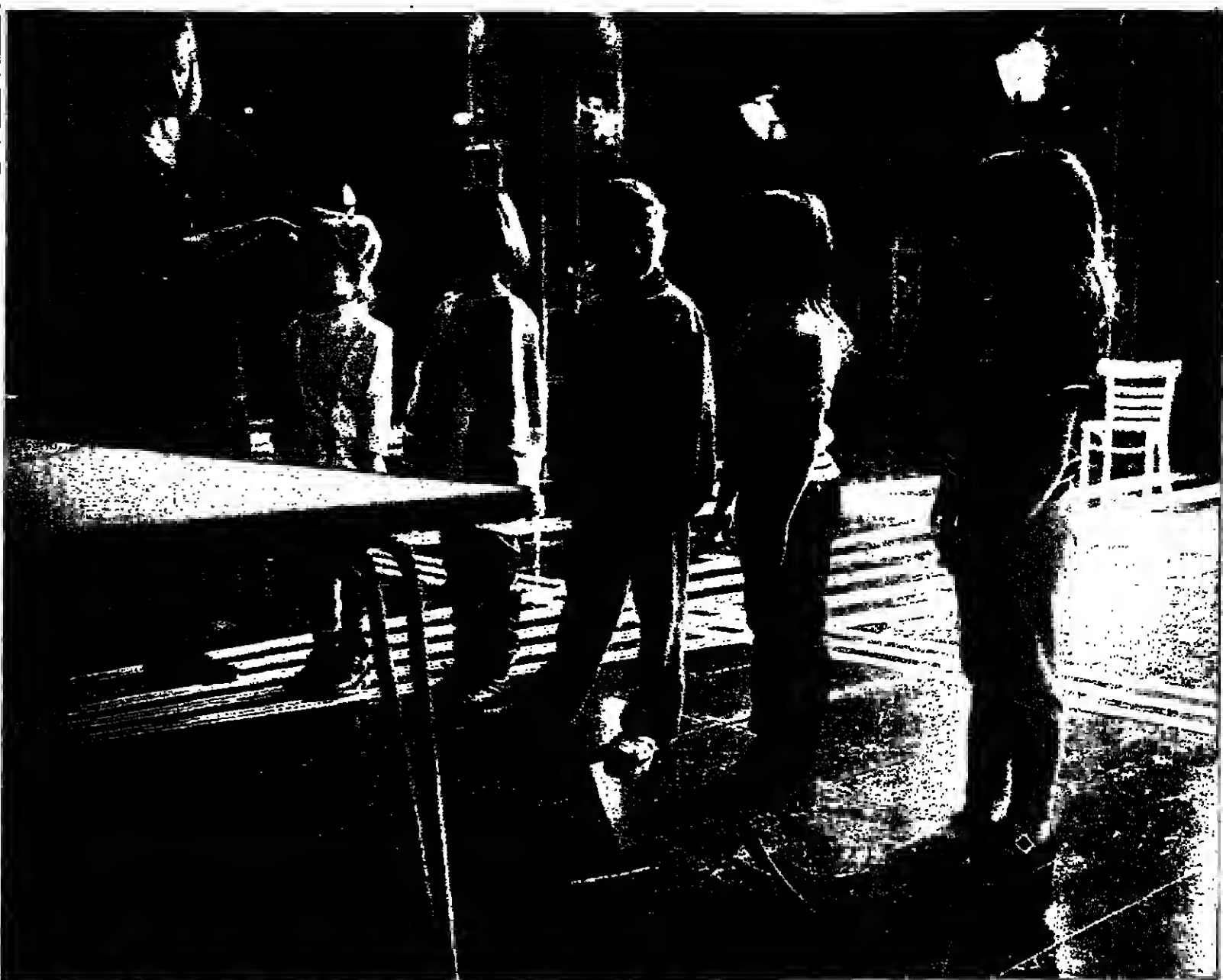
They would meet the costs of re-testing but emphasised that IMx currently detected "virtually all" HIV-positive cases.

Up to 30,000 of between 100,000 and 125,000 HIV tests carried out since September are understood to have been carried out by the IMx system, which was introduced in Britain in July.

Beverley Priest, from London Lighthouse, Europe's biggest HIV centre, said she hoped that the incident would be a public health education lesson.

"It shows there are a lot of people who thought they might be positive," she said.

Who will be the next pinball wizard?



Stage-struck: Girls preparing to be auditioned yesterday for the part of four-year-old Tommy in the musical at the Shaftesbury Theatre in the West End of London. Six new children will replace those who have played the young star since the show opened last month. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

National Astronomical Meeting: Scientists surprised by brightness of 'fluorescence' emitted by Hyakutake and changes on distant planet

Comet's X-ray vision lights up sky at night

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Comet Hyakutake - the most spectacular comet visible to the naked eye for 20 years - has pulled an amazing surprise on astronomers. It is not just bright with visible light, it is "fluorescent" with high-energy X-rays as well.

This is the first case of X-rays being emitted by a comet. They were picked up by the German orbiting X-ray satellite Rosat at the end of March.

According to Dr Alan Fitzsimmons, an astrophysicist from Queen's University Belfast, who lectured yesterday: "Everybody's just sitting back and saying 'Wow, X-rays from a comet!'"

Dr Fitzsimmons said that astronomers could not make sense of the observations. "We don't know where they come from," he said.

Dr Konrad Dennerl of the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics at Garching in Germany, where the effect was observed, said "it was a thrilling moment".

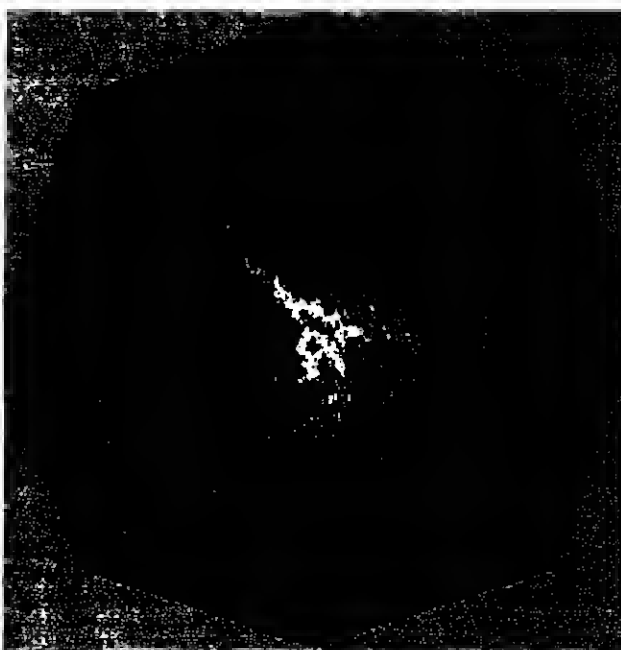
The team observed the emissions over a period of 24 hours as the comet neared its closest approach to earth. It was less than 10 million miles away when Rosat started observing.

The X-rays seem to come from a crescent-shaped region on its sunward side. One theory is that X-rays from the sun were absorbed by the comet's "atmosphere" of water vapour

surrounding the icy nucleus and then re-emitted by a process known as fluorescence.

A second theory is that the X-rays are produced from the violent collision between the comet and the supersonic "wind" of plasma and particles streaming away from the sun.

According to Dr Fitzsimmons, comets such as Hyakutake which venture past the Earth probably originate from Pluto. More than 30 large bodies, known as "Kuiper Belt Objects", have been found, he said. "Their surfaces are dark as coal or even darker. We think their surfaces are covered with a layer of dark carbon-based molecules. ... The colour varies. Some are almost grey and some a deep red."



Spiral jets emanating from the rotating nucleus of comet Hyakutake can be seen in this false-colour image taken electronically with a charge-coupled device by Dr Alan Fitzsimmons at the observatory of Queen's University, Belfast

Storm clouds gathering as spring comes to Uranus

TOM WILKIE

It's springtime on the planet Uranus. And just as April showers herald spring here in Britain, the clouds are gathering in the skies above Uranus. The difference is that the seasons on Uranus last for more than 20 of our earth years. Not even Gene Kelly would have kept on singing in the rain for that long.

The sight of a few wisps of cloud in the atmosphere of this distant gas giant planet has taken astronomers by surprise, according to Dr Heidi Hammel, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who lectured on "Exploring the Giant Planets with the Hubble space telescope" at the conference.

When, a decade ago, it was

visited by the Voyager space probe, the pictures revealed an apparently featureless disk, but now the Hubble Space Telescope is showing that clouds are forming, the harbinger of changing weather. "In the next few years I think there may be interesting things happening on Uranus," Dr Hammel said.

She added: "Uranus is so peculiar because its rotational axis is tipped over 90 degrees." The Earth's axis points almost vertically upwards out of the disk of the solar system whereas the axis of Uranus lies in the plane of the system. This means that, loosely speaking, for about a quarter of the orbit, the "North" Pole points at the sun, for the next quarter the equator points sunwards, for the next

quarter it's the South Pole and then its the equator again.

Dr Hammel believes the reason Voyager took such disappointing pictures of the planet "just happened to be an accident of timing. Uranus has times when it is active and that depends on what season it is. We're not used to thinking about seasons that are 20 years long".

Astronomers in the 1890s had reported that they observed clouded hands on Uranus although such clouds had not been observed since, Dr Hammel said. Now the images of the Hubble telescope, which is able to picture the atmosphere of the planet developing over time are "rapidly changing our perception of these planets and how stable they are."

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

on Monday

A new regular section, Family Life, that deals with the interests and problems of parents and children. Julie Myerson's column also focuses on home life. Plus: a new series - Do we need? - which challenges the icons of modern Britain. And, every Monday unrivalled coverage of the expanding world of information technology in our Network pull-out section.

on Tuesday

Health: how wearing a virtual reality helmet could help cure phobias and other psychological problems. Plus: flaky nails are not simply a problem for the vain

and Sport

A 24-page tabloid section with all the action from the weekend's sporting action. Plus: the Monday interview in which a leading figure comes under the microscope, an unbeatable results service, gossip, speculation and fact from behind the scenes and the best in sports photography.

on Wednesday

Bridget Jones's diary continues to chronicle the encounters and exquisite embarrassments in the life of Britain's most-read spinster. Plus: the midweek travel section, your money, finance

and law. In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

on Thursday

All our regular features, including Virginia Ironside's Christmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education

and graduate plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10 1/2 inches

on Friday

24 Seven - a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music



Helpline to counsel 'suicidal' doctors

GLENDIA COOPER

A 24-hour helpline is to be launched for doctors after a British Medical Association survey revealed that one in five had contemplated suicide and many were taking to drink or drugs.

The BMA chairman, Dr Sandy Macara, laid the blame for high levels of stress at the Government's door, linking its rise to "intolerable practice" within the National Health Service.

"Almost 90 per cent of people perceived that their levels of stress were greater than five years ago," he said. "It is no coincidence that we are about to celebrate the fifth anniversary of NHS reforms."

The one-year pilot telephone service, staffed by trained counsellors from the specialist company Care Assist, aims to provide doctors with "coping strategies" for dealing with high levels of stress in the work place. Sandra Ridley, manager of the counselling services, said:

"The survey of more than 800 GPs and hospital doctors published in the BMA News Review magazine found seven out of ten doctors said they suffered from work-related stress. More than one-third increased their alcohol consumption to help them cope, and a few became drug abusers."

Nearly 90 per cent of doctors thought they faced greater stress than they did five years

ago and the same proportion felt patients had been encouraged to make unreasonable demands on them. More than 20 per cent said stress caused them to think of committing suicide.

But the "continued prevalence of a macho medical culture" meant few — only 15 per cent — were likely to seek professional help, preferring to talk to family, colleagues or friends. Just 17 per cent said they had taken time off work.

One anonymous West Country family doctor said: "Many GPs I know are stressed to the point where their health and their ability to work safely are suffering. If we judged ourselves as we judge our patients, many of us would be off sick."

Another from Wales said: "One of my partners recently suffered burn-out, which led to alcohol abuse and attempted suicide. This caused great stress and guilt for the rest of us."

Dr Macara said he was "shattered" by the results of the BMA survey. He said: "We have the intolerable practice of doctors being told which patients to give priority to on the basis of where the money is."

"Added to that... the Government has incited higher expectations in patients of the service they should receive in an environment which doesn't have the resources to provide those standards of patient care."

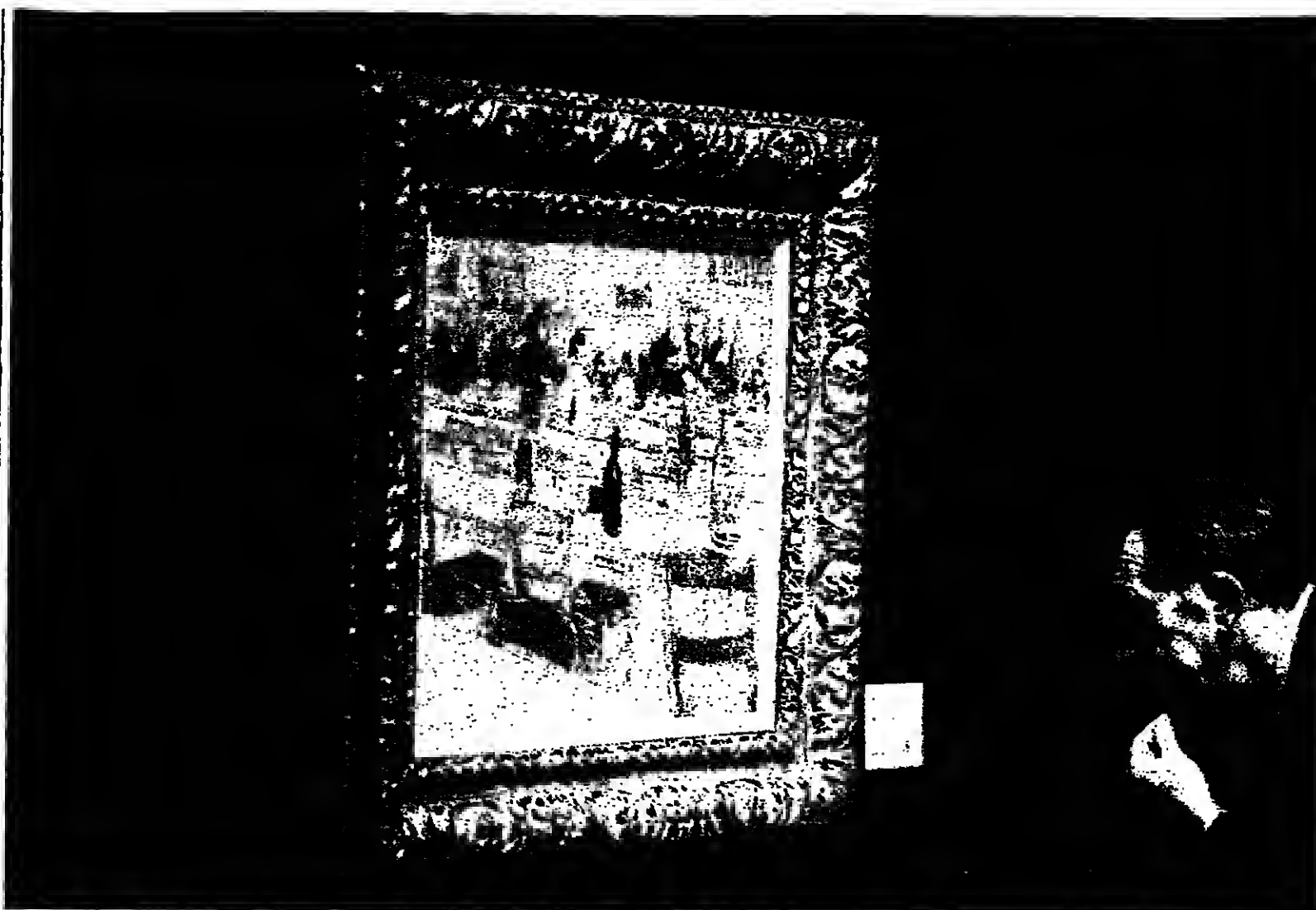
"It doesn't guarantee higher standards, but it is the best guarantee of demoralising and alienating those who are doing their best in difficult circumstances."

Last year at the BMA Annual Representatives Meeting in Harrogate, members called on the Government to set up such a helpline and authorised the BMA to launch a pilot scheme if the Government did not act.

The secretary of the association, Dr Mac Armstrong, said: "If I were the managing director of a company and it was revealed that my key personnel were suffering from this degree of stress, I would be calling for the head of personnel on a plate."



Dr Sandy Macara: Doctors 'demoralised and alienated'



Rare scene: Van Gogh's *Intérieur d'un Restaurant*, to be in Christie's London Impressionist and Modern Art auction on 30 April. Photograph: Edward Webb

'Snags' hindered attempts to save pilot

Crew and medical staff fighting to save a dying airline captain who collapsed during a flight ran into a series of snags, an official report revealed yesterday.

Roger Attenborough, 54, shopped unconscious as he prepared to land a 220-passenger Britannia Airways Boeing 757 at Malaga airport in southern Spain.

His co-pilot managed to land the aircraft safely but Captain Attenborough was declared dead after he was taken to hospital.

An Air Accident Investigation Branch into the incident on 28 January found:

□ A nurse could not be strapped into the jump (spare) seat in the cockpit so she could attend to the captain.

□ The position of the captain's seat also made it impossible for the nurse to get into the left observer's seat.

□ Having declared an emergency, the co-pilot could not land first time because the approach he was given triggered off a ground proximity warning system alert.

□ A waiting paramedic could not board for two or three minutes as the steps had not arrived.

The report said the co-pilot had initially summoned assistance after he noticed the captain was struggling for breath.

A flight attendant arrived to find the captain apparently unconscious. Neither the flight attendant nor the nurse could tell if he had a very faint pulse

or none at all. Two flight attendants and the nurse gave the captain heart massage when the plane landed and the paramedic administered adrenaline.

The report said the captain "died during or shortly after the flight". It added that the Spanish authorities had carried out a post-mortem examination but a full medical report was awaited.

The case continues.

Threat to Prince's village

The Prince of Wales's dream village will lose its unique rustic identity if bureaucrats in a neighbouring town get their way. Councillors in Dorchester, Dorset, want to extend their town's boundaries to swallow up the Prince's £22m Poundbury development.

Residents of the village, which is built on Duchy of Cornwall land, say the plans will rob the settlement of its rural

atmosphere. Properties combine Victorian, Gothic and Renaissance styles. Thousands of homes are to be built there in the next 25 years.

Dorchester Town Council, which wants to expand its boundaries to take in the Prince's parish, has turned to the district council for backing.

This week its policy and resources committee is to decide whether to recommend a

boundaries review by the Local Government Commission.

Dorchester's Town Clerk, Dennis Holmes, said it had been a long-term view that the boundaries should be expanded. But Bill Brazier, chairman of Bradford Peverell Parish Council, which includes Poundbury, says Dorchester wants to expand so that the council can levy tax on the new homes built there in the future.

Tobacco giant loses £2m claim against widow

A giant tobacco firm which demanded that a widow should pay £2m in legal fees before she sued it over the death of her husband from lung cancer, lost its court action yesterday.

Lord Gill, at the Court of Session, Edinburgh, Scotland's supreme civil court, rejected the claims of Imperial Tobacco Ltd that Margaret McTear, of Beith, Strathclyde, should have to find the £2m for expenses of the litigation.

Her late husband, Alfred McTear, who died of lung cancer aged 49, in 1993, had begun the legal action against the tobacco company, suing for £100,000 when his disease was diagnosed. The action is regarded as a test case.

Mr McTear, who had been a cigarette smoker for 30 years, claimed that Imperial Tobacco should have known smoking caused lung cancer. He said that the company had failed to warn its customers of the dangers of smoking.

In the present action, Imperial Tobacco claimed that research needed to defend the case would cost £2m and would

take about 15 people two years to complete. It demanded security against the very real risk of incurring irrecoverable expenses.

Colin McEachran QC, for Mrs McTear, who is working for her on a no-win, no-fee basis, had earlier told the court: "Mrs McTear is clearly unable to meet even £1m. She has little capital and a meagre income. Imperial Tobacco are making a mountain out of a straight-forward case."

Yesterday, Lord Gill said in his written judgment: "Where a case can be seen to be hopeless the court is entitled and probably obliged to order caution [payment of some legal fees in advance]. But where, as in this case, that cannot properly be said, I consider that the court should be reluctant to make an assessment of the pursuer's prospects..."

Lord Gill said Mrs McTear worked in Littlewoods and had a widow's pension. She was not receiving funding from any source. She had been refused legal aid and her legal advisers were acting for her on a spec-

ulative basis. He added: "There is no hope of her finding caution in any significant amount."

The judge said that whatever the intention behind Imperial Tobacco's present legal action for Mrs McTear to find £2m caution, the inevitable effect of its being granted would be that the damages action which she is pursuing against Imperial Tobacco would come to an end.

Lord Gill said: "In deciding on a motion of this kind, the court must have a proper regard to the avoidance of injustice to the defender."

"But the court must also keep in mind the risk that if the pursuer's means or the defender's probable expenses, or both, were to be decisive of the question, a pursuer with a potentially valid claim might be denied access to justice."

The judge refused Imperial Tobacco's claims for Mrs McTear to put up the £2m caution for legal expenses.

Mrs McTear can now go ahead with her £100,000 damages action against the tobacco company.

Suicide gunman murder suspect

A gunman who killed himself after a botched armed robbery was wanted for murders in Spain and Portugal, police said yesterday.

John Willie Holden, 52, shot himself in Kingston Park shopping centre in Hull last Thursday after running from a jewellery shop. His body was found with an automatic pistol, more than 40 rounds of ammunition, a two-way radio and a canister of CS gas.

Detective Superintendent Geoff Walker, leading an inquiry into the incident, said



John Holden: Wanted man

Holden, from Doncaster, South Yorkshire, was wanted for a series of crimes in his home town and Derbyshire. He had failed to turn up at a trial for burglary at Doncaster Crown Court.

Two men seen near the jewellery shop around the time of the robbery have not come forward and are thought to have been involved. After the raid failed, Holden hit the shop manager over the head with an iron bar before fleeing, shooting at chasing police. He stopped outside a toy store and shot himself in the head.

Holden is believed to have been involved in the murder of a British tourist who was shot dead on a beach in Quateira, Portugal, in October 1993.

The second murder was in the Spanish resort of Fuengirola last July. Police said he had been involved in an argument with a Scottish man in a bar. Holden left with a handgun and shot the man dead before turning the gun on the victim's girlfriend and the two British owners of the bar. All were seriously hurt but have recovered.

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Chernobyl: Ten years on and 5 million have been exposed to radioactivity following blast

Row over death toll from worst nuclear disaster

ADRIAN BRIDGE
Central Europe Correspondent

Almost 10 years after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster there is still confusion over precisely how many victims it claimed.

According to Ukrainian health ministry officials, 125,000 of their countrymen have already died as a result of the accident and many more are set to follow. On top of that, tens of thousands are said to have gone down with crippling radiation-induced diseases, and incidences of thyroid cancer among children have gone up a hundredfold.

Western scientists dispute the figures, with some putting the number of deaths directly attributable to the disaster at just 45. They concede, however, that the full picture will not become clear for many years.

Ten years after Chernobyl we seem to have got nowhere with regard to the casualties," said David Kyd of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "But those giving the higher figures tend to be people who want to draw attention to what happened and gain sympathy."

The motive is pretty clear. No matter how many people actually died as a result of it, the explosion at reactor number four of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant on 26 April 1986 still ranks as the biggest man-made disaster of the century.

Although the radioactive fallout from the blast reached Scotland, the highest concentration of people affected were in Ukraine and the then Soviet republic of Belarus, immediately to the north.

In all 5 million people are believed to have been exposed to

radioactivity following the blast. In Ukraine, Belarus and Russia more than 500,000 people were displaced from affected towns and villages and thousands of square miles of land were contaminated.

Ten years on the sense of shock, for those who experienced it, remains acute. Alexander Lukashenko, the President of Belarus, yesterday told a gathering of international politicians and scientists in Vienna that Chernobyl had been a "radioactive tornado [the like of which had] never seen before".

Claiming that his country had ever since been devoting 25 per cent of its annual budget to dealing with the effects of the

Commission, aims to look at the costs of Chernobyl in human, environmental and even psychological terms. Its participants are also looking at how to ensure there can be no repeat of such a disaster.

In addition to the two still at Chernobyl itself, there are a further 13 Chernobyl-type reactors in operation in the former Soviet Union. Despite safety improvements, all of them still represent a danger, according to Western experts.

The countries operating the plants say they cannot shut them down because they depend on them for their power supplies. The cost of serious improvements at the plants is estimated at around \$100 (£65m)-\$150m per unit, but to date, Western pledges have amounted to only \$20-\$30m per unit.

The Ukrainian Prime Minister, Yevhen Marchuk, yesterday confirmed his readiness to close down the two reactors still in operation at Chernobyl by the year 2000 - as long as the right amount of Western aid would be forthcoming.

Mr Marchuk did not give a figure for the cost of shutting down Chernobyl, but in the past Ukraine has proposed a figure of around \$4bn to cover the completion of two new nuclear reactors, as well as continuing medical and other expenses for tens of thousands of people affected by the accident.

Last week, the Group of Seven major industrialised nations offered Ukraine \$3.1bn in exchange for closing the plant. With some in Ukraine resisting the move, G7 leaders meeting in Moscow later this month may even increase the offer.

Leading article, page 12



Alexander Lukashenko: Blast was a 'radioactive tornado'

disaster, he also used the occasion to plead for more aid from the international community. "I call upon you to help return the contaminated areas to full life," Mr Lukashenko said. "We cannot conduct this work on our own."

The Vienna conference, which has been organised by the IAEA, the World Health Organisation and the European

Reactor explosion 'could never happen again'

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster could not be repeated, either at Chernobyl itself or elsewhere in the former Soviet bloc, the Chairman of the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) said yesterday in a statement marking the tenth anniversary of the world's worst nuclear accident. Technical improvements to the installations and the growth of a Western-style "safety culture" meant that the accident "as it happened in 1986, cannot happen again".

But the Chernobyl explosion has received less attention than other nuclear sites in the former Soviet Union because of the economic situation in Ukraine. Similar reactors - RBMKs - in Russia itself had received more modifications.

Although the European Union had put about £5m into improving nuclear installations in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the same amount again was needed.

Remy Carle, the chairman of the voluntary association which unites 126 operators of nuclear power plants around the world, was addressing a meeting of the association in London yesterday, the last before the anniversary of the accident on 26 April. He said the cost of re-deploying workers, closing the plant and replacing it, estimated at \$1bn - had discouraged the idea.

"The main causes of the accident have disappeared - the deficiencies have been corrected," Mr Carle said.

He said the main design shortcomings of the RBMK reactor, conceived in the 1960s and built

in the 1970s, were the design of the control rods and the "void coefficient". Before the accident, the control rods could cause a sharp increase in radioactivity when they were lowered into a reactor operating at low power. This can no longer happen.

The "void coefficient" is the change in reactivity - the intensity of the nuclear chain reaction - which accompanies a change in the density of the liquid circulating round the reactor core - the "primary coolant". When water turned to steam, reactivity would increase as the density of the coolant decreased. This could create a positive void coefficient, which could cause the reactor to become unstable. Steps taken meant this was now impossible.

Attention had also been paid to fire-retardant measures.



Aces high: The Catalan leader, Jordi Pujol, whose support will be necessary for Mr Aznar to take office as Prime Minister

Photograph: AP

Catalans display ruling passion

ELIZABETH NASH
Barcelona

Five weeks after Spanish general elections left the conservative Popular Party (PP) just short of a ruling majority, horse trading is intensifying to secure for the party leader, Jose Maria Aznar, enough parliamentary votes to become prime minister. Success hangs on the 16 Catalan nationalist MPs, and to a lesser degree the five moderate Basque nationalists, but neither grouping has yet opted for Mr Aznar and may take another two weeks to make up their mind.

Mr Aznar, in his passion for a deal, is being pushed to meet demands for regional autonomy that could surpass anything contemplated by the previous Socialist government. This would mark an extraordinary turnaround for a party born of Francoism ostensibly committed to the principle of a single

Spanish nation. Powerful regional voices in the PP even urge constitutional reform to transform Spain into a German-style federation.

The Catalan leader, Jordi Pujol, said yesterday in Barcelona that the focus of talks between the two parties was regional autonomy. But nothing was in the bag. "We have received few requests from the PP but those we have received don't amount to much. Things are still at an early stage," he said, and added: "We are not going to vote for Aznar in exchange for nothing."

Without the Catalans, Mr Aznar can kiss goodbye to power, and Mr Pujol is alive to the opportunity this offers. A deal will centre around a bigger Catalan share of tax revenues - wealthy Catalonia contributes 25 per cent more to Madrid than the national average and receives 25 per cent less.

The PP is agreeable to giving

Catalonia more tax revenue, but will not say how much. Mr Pujol says he wants, in proportion to the size of Catalonia's population, as much as Spain's poorest regions. This would mean a vast increase that would stretch Madrid sorely and could prompt howls of resentment from the poorer regions.

Mr Pujol also wants Mr Aznar to recognise Catalonia as a nation, beyond the autonomy enjoyed by Spain's other regions, and to hand over to it powers on trade, penal, police and prison matters, coastal fishing, ports, railways and airports. The PP has swallowed the bait, as they say here, accepted the principle and is preparing detailed responses.

The move would transform the balance of forces between Madrid and the regions established in the 1978 constitution, but the constitution itself provides for such an eventuality and the Catalans say a parliament

ary vote would be sufficient.

At the prospect of a juicy bilateral deal shaping up between Madrid and Barcelona, Spain's other nationalities, the Basques and the Galicians, have put in their pennyworth. The conservative Basque National Party leader, Xabier Arzalluz, warned Mr Aznar this week that the Basques, too, wanted to be treated as a nation. He wants to complete a transfer of powers agreed by the Socialists.

The Galician leader, Manuel Fraga, a PP founder and heavyweight, complained that Galicia must not be marginalised, a plea that appears to have been heard by his party. Mr Fraga, a minister under Franco, has gone even further than the Basques and the Catalans in his zeal to decentralise. He proposes that Spain become a federal state along German lines and reform its constitution. Fellow conservatives, unnerved by his audacity, say such ex-

trêmes are not yet necessary.

Mr Aznar and Mr Pujol, the men of the moment, appear an ill-matched pair, worlds apart in age, style and beliefs. The consummate operator, Mr Pujol, 65, was jailed by Franco for upholding Catalan rights, and has been a local hero for decades. Mr Aznar, 44, was swiftness for his tax exams during upheavals that swept away the dictatorship, and despite his election victory, remains politically unproven.

Neither man achieved prominence through beauty contests or charm schools, the editor of *El Mundo* newspaper observed recently, and neither, he noted, is a natural host for peak-time television spectacles. But, the editor concluded, with a nod to the close of *Casablanca*, where Humphrey Bogart and Claud Rains stand together on the terrace watching the plane depart, pragmatism and propinquity could spark the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Skulls found in Argentine jail oven

DAVID HASKEL
Reuter

Buenos Aires - Remains of skulls and other human bones have been found in the bread oven at a maximum-security jail, where seven inmates disappeared during a revolt last week.

"Several bones have been found among the oven's ashes, including femur heads and parts of skulls," a court official said. "We have not been able to determine yet how many victims there were or to whom the bones belonged."

On Monday, the Buenos Aires province Governor, Eduardo Duhalde said prisoners killed other inmates and cremated their bodies during the

week-long revolt by 1,000 inmates at Sierra Chica prison. The revolt sparked riots among 5,000 inmates of other jails, which ended on Sunday.

The prisoner's rebellion held the Argentine public and the government of President, Carlos Menem in thrall for several days.

Investigators said teeth were found in the prison's bakery oven. Mr Duhalde's comments appeared to confirm reports quoting inmates' relatives last week as saying 17 Sierra Chica prisoners were killed in fighting and their bodies incinerated in the prison bakery. It was not clear how the relatives knew this and authorities have confirmed only the death of a 51-year-old inmate from slash wounds.

Twenty-seven hostages, including a woman judge, were freed unharmed on Sunday as the prisoners surrendered after their leaders received guarantees there would be no reprisals for the crisis.

There were conflicting reports on the concessions made to the prisoners, who revolted on 30 March. Mr Duhalde said no concessions were made beyond promising quick and wide application of a law deducting two years from sentences for every year served awaiting trial.

But newspapers said the inmates were promised a prison commission with inmate representatives would be set up and that softer sentences for car theft would be applied.



Carlos Menem: Shaken by week-long revolt

Zimbabwe lake closed by pollution

Harare (Reuter) - The Zimbabwean government has closed the capital's main source of water to commercial fishing and recreational activities after the death of thousands of fish from suspected pollution.

Chen Chimutengwende, the Environment and Tourism Minister, said the closure at Lake Chivero was to allow the government to determine the extent of the problem. He warned people around the area, 25 miles from Harare, against eating fish from the lake. He said efforts were being made to identify the source of the pollution and action would be taken against those responsible.

"I am warning manufacturing companies, local authorities and individuals to refrain from dumping toxic and hazardous substances and effluent into the Manyame river system and the lake," he said.

City authorities in Harare have assured worried residents that the water is safe to drink because it is treated.

First signs of the problem, which local environmentalists are billing as one of the worst to hit Harare's water supplies, came three weeks ago, when officials began seeing dead fish floating belly-up.

Scientists at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare blame high levels of ammonia, brought to the surface when cool temperatures allowed deep water to rise, for the death of the fish.

Croat camp chief to face Hague tribunal

KEIRON HENDERSON
Reuters

Amsterdam - The UN war crimes tribunal for former Yugoslavia yesterday took custody of a Bosnian Croat prison camp commander, who is one of the first defendants to be charged with war crimes by the Bosnian Serbs.

Zdravko Mucic, named in a tribunal indictment last month, was banded over by Austrian police at Schiphol airport and was immediately taken to the tribunal's detention centre, near The Hague.

Mr Mucic, 41, was arrested in Vienna at the tribunal's

request and will appear at a preliminary hearing at the tribunal in The Hague tomorrow.

The tribunal last month charged Mr Mucic and three Bosnian Muslims with war crimes against Bosnian Serbs. Mr Mucic, charged with commanding the Celebici camp at Konjic, in central Bosnia, between May and November 1992, was identified last month by the Bosnian Serb news agency as a Croat.

The tribunal said he was accused of responsibility for crimes committed by his subordinates, including at least 14 murders, rape and torture. He was also accused of being

responsible for causing great suffering and for forcing detainees to have oral sex with each other, it said.

Mr Mucic and his deputy, Hazim Delic, were indicted along with Zeljko Delalic, a Bosnian Muslim military commander, and a Celebici camp guard, Esad Landzo.

Mr Delalic, who was the commander of a unit of Bosnian Muslim forces from June to November 1992, was arrested by the German police in Munich last month.

The tribunal said then that it expected to take custody of Mr Mucic and Mr Delalic "within weeks".

Mr Landzo and Mr Delic are still at large, although the Bosnian authorities have given the tribunal assurances that the accused men will be arrested and handed over.

The two men were accused of beating men to death with wooden planks, baseball bats, shovels and pieces of cable, as well as torturing detainees, many in their sixties and seventies, with pliers, corrosives, electric currents and hot metal pinners.

On one occasion they were alleged to have nailed a Muslim political badge to a man's forehead. Mr Delic also faces two charges of multiple rape.

Mr Mucic is the second Croat to be taken into tribunal custody after a Bosnian Croat general, Tihomir Blaskic, gave himself up to the tribunal last week.

The tribunal now has four men in its custody from the 57 war crimes suspects it has charged. To date, the tribunal has indicted 46 Serbs, eight Croats and three Muslims.

The German authorities are also holding a Bosnian Serb, Goran Lajic, one of 13 Serbs charged last July with atrocities against Muslims at the Keraterm prison camp in Prijedor, north-west Bosnia. The tribunal has said it expects Mr Lajic to be transferred soon.

Liberian warlord takes peace-keepers hostage

JACKSON KANNEH
Reuter

Monrovia - Fighting between rival ethnic factions rocked Liberia's capital for a fourth day yesterday, as the United States approved the airlifting of its citizens and other foreign nationals out to safety.

Hundreds of frightened civilians, fearing a resumption of the six-year-old civil war, took advantage of a temporary lull in the fighting to seek refuge in the United States embassy annex, swelling the number already sheltering there.

Fighters loyal to the fugitive warlord Roosevelt Johnson held several hundred Lebanese and Liberian civilians and about 20 Nigerian peace-keepers hostage in a barracks where Mr Johnson was reported at one stage to be hiding.

The fighting and looting began at the weekend with a stand-off between supporters of Mr Johnson and soldiers loyal to the ruling council of state, which sacked him as its rural development minister and ordered his arrest on charges of murder during a clash with militia rivals.

The six-member council, which was set up under the latest of a long line of peace deals, comprises the main faction leaders as well as civilians.

Shooting began again near the army barracks. Diplomats, officials and witnesses said that about 40 Lebanese, mostly women and children, about 20 Nigerian peace-keepers and several hundred Liberians were being held in the barracks.

Diplomats said more than 200 foreigners were in the main US embassy compound. Others were trapped in their homes elsewhere in the city.

About 450 Americans are in Liberia, Africa's oldest independent republic, and which was founded by freed American slaves in 1847.

The smouldering civil war, which has killed 150,000 people, began in 1989. But for the past three years the Liberian capital has been comparatively safe.

The barracks of the Armed Forces of Liberia, which are now just another militia faction, has been the focus of fighting which has flared sporadically elsewhere in the city.

Sustained bursts of shooting have mingled over the past few

days with mortar, artillery and rocket-propelled grenade blasts.

There was no reliable casualty toll from the fighting. Medical aid workers spoke of at least six dead and 40 wounded.

West African peace-keepers of the Economic force patrolled the city. A spokesman said that they were trying to broker a ceasefire.

"At the end of the day, all of us have to come to the negotiating table. It is my appeal to all of the parties to cease fire," Major-General John Iteinger said, offering his Ecomog force as mediators.

Ghana, which is current chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, which sent in the peace-keepers, told Mr Johnson that they would ensure his security during talks on his differences with the council of state.

However, his whereabouts is not known.

Last August's peace deal envisaged a ceasefire, disarmament and elections taking place within a year.

But skirmishing militiamen have repeatedly breached the ceasefire, while the process of disarmament has yet to start.

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BRANCHES NATIONWIDE

Jordan joins anti-Saddam crusade

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

In a sign that King Hussein is joining the enemies of Iraq, US air force fighter aircraft will for the first time start to use bases in Jordan to enforce the no-fly zone over southern Iraq.

The arrival of the 30 fighters and 1,000 air force personnel marks a reversal of policy for Jordan, which for five years has been Iraq's lifeline to the outside world.

The US aircraft are officially in Jordan for two months of war games codenamed "Eager Tiger" but the willingness of King Hussein to allow them to

overfly Iraq shows that he has, in effect, joined the Gulf war allies. During the war in 1991 Jordan maintained a benevolent neutrality towards Iraq and incurred the hostility of the US, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The no-fly zone over southern Iraq was imposed by the US in 1992 to protect Iraqis in the south of the country from Iraqi air attack. In addition to the surveillance flights by 18 F16s and 12 F15s supported by four tanker aircraft, the US will train the Jordanian air force, which is to receive 16 F16s in 1997. The US planes will be stationed at two bases, one at Azraq, 40 miles from Amman,

and the other in the south of the country.

Relations between Amman and Baghdad have deteriorated sharply since August last year, when Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel, son-in-law of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, fled to Amman. His public welcome by King Hussein marked the end of Jordan's previously friendly relations with Baghdad, which date back to the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, and the start of a much closer alliance with the US and Israel.

The road across the desert from Baghdad to Amman is Iraq's only land route to the outside world, so the growing hos-

tility of King Hussein is a serious blow. There are tighter restrictions on trade with Iraq, and the Iraqi opposition has been allowed to establish offices in Amman. General Wafiq al-Samarai, former head of Iraqi military intelligence, who defected to the opposition and had been living in Damascus, moved to Jordan in the last week.

There is no doubt that President Saddam is angered by King Hussein's turning against him. When an Iraqi diplomat was expelled recently, Jordanian sources say he was found conducting a surveillance of the house of Abdel-Karim Kahariti, the newly appointed Jordan-

ian prime minister, known for his hostility to the Iraqi government.

Jordan was also humiliated when General Hussein Kamel and his brother, who had been the king's guests, were killed by President Saddam when they returned to Iraq in the mistaken belief that they had been granted a pardon.

Given Iraq's dependence on the road to Amman, it is unlikely that it would start using violence against King Hussein unless it had another outlet. At the same time, the Iraqi regime has had no qualms about using violence in Amman in the past. An Iraqi nuclear expert on his way to Libya was shot dead in the

street, allegedly by a gunman working at the Iraqi embassy.

The switch in alliances is not popular among many Jordanians, even if pictures of President Saddam are no longer on display in Amman, as they were in the Gulf war. Jordanian business is also heavily dependent on exports to Iraq. A journalist who last year said 42 Jordanian politicians, businessmen and journalists were on the Iraqi payroll was immediately jailed for three days and put on trial.

Officials, aware of pro-Iraqi public opinion, say that Jordanian pilots will not take part in the flights over Iraq. In addition, Western diplomats said

that the US aircraft will not fly directly from Jordan but via Saudi Arabia. The Pentagon said last month that the fighters would remain in Jordan until mid-June, while the US navy carrier group normally deployed in the Gulf is absent.

It is unlikely that the US overflights are doing much good to Iraqis in the south.

The government in Baghdad has drained the marshes, considered a bastion of resistance, of water by digging canals, and has burned towns and villages used by dissidents. All this has been monitored by satellite, but without provoking any international reaction.

South Lebanon 'on brink of war'

ROBERT FISK
Beirut

A fierce exchange of fire between Hizbollah guerrillas and Israeli troops across the Lebanese-Israeli frontier yesterday provoked warnings from both Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, the Hizbollah leader, of widespread military action in southern Lebanon.

Mr Peres visited northern Israel but found protesters blocking the roads to Kiryat Shmona after 18 Katyusha rockets had exploded around the town. The Israeli army fired back, but the Police Minister, but applauded Binayamin Netanyahu when the right-wing Likud party leader arrived - a reminder for Mr Peres of how Lebanon now threatens his electoral prospects.

Irish UN troops were last night trying to find out who set off the roadside bomb in southern Lebanon that led to the worst outbreak of violence in the region for almost a month. The killing of Mazen Farhat, 14, outside the village of Bradchit and the wounding of two smaller children led to the Hizbollah reprisal attack on northern Israel which left 13 Israelis wounded - and counter-retaliation by the Israelis, who fired 200 howitzer shells around the neighbouring villages.

Speaking at an army base outside Kiryat Shmona, Mr Peres, who denied the Israelis set off the bomb, refused to say what military action he contemplated. "We'll do what we have to... This government does not have a policy of restraint."

Mr Nasrallah said any large-scale Israeli military operation would reopen a general war in southern Lebanon.

First reports suggested the explosives that killed Mazen were placed on the Bradchit road by Israeli-backed militias to explode when Hizbollah guerrillas passed on their way to attack an Israeli artillery base south of the village. But local security sources said he had been playing with the bomb which killed him and that an investigation by the UN's Irish battalion had still not discovered who left the explosives.

Dozens killed in Turkey's new offensive on Kurds

HUGH POPE
Istanbul

Hopes of an early change in Turkey's Kurdish policy dimmed yesterday as the military revealed the extent of its annual spring offensive, launched five days ago. It has already claimed the lives of more than 130 combatants.

Backed by a new array of US Black Hawk and Cobra helicopters and an undiminished belief that force is the only way to solve the Kurdish problem, the military has once again sent thousands of troops up the steep valleys of south-east Turkey to search for and destroy any concentrations of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Years of unrelenting Turkish military pressure have driven the PKK far back into the mountains, but somehow the PKK never meets that final end that the armed forces are once again predicting. The army said its assaults found at least one well-defended PKK mountain base fitted out with its own bakery, electricity-generating system, school and hostels.

The main thrust of the offensive was north-east of Diyarbakir in pursuit of some 200 rebels, who the Turkish military said had recently crossed into Turkey after training. The PKK's main base is in Syria, but such training is usually undertaken in Iraq or Lebanon.

The new Turkish government of Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz also ordered planes to attack targets over the border in northern Iraq, where the PKK has successfully infiltrated Iraqi Kurd territory and established fortified bases.

"The message of the offensive is not just for the PKK... It is for Iran and Syria as well," *Milleyet* newspaper said. "Turkey wants to show its strength."

Turkey has faced growing antagonism recently from both Iran and the Arab world over a range of issues, from sharing the waters of the Euphrates to a joint military training agreement that Turkey signed with Israel in February.

Since the offensive started on Saturday, Turkey has conceded that at least 30 Turkish soldiers have been killed. The govern-



Last post: Turkish soldiers paying tribute to their 30 fallen colleagues at a mass funeral in Diyarbakir

Photograph: Reuters

ment says that nearly 100 PKK rebels have also died.

The fighting looks certain to put an end to the unilateral ceasefire announced by the PKK in December, a ceasefire that Turkey officially rejected but which did appear sharply to reduce clashes and casualties.

Television images of troops scouring hillsides and shelling the snow-capped mountains may also put paid to hopes that

the new government can somehow come up with a Kurdish policy that does not begin and end with military campaigns.

Barely three weeks ago, Mr Yilmaz was telling reporters: "We must break down the mountains of our minds... [the Kurdish problem] cannot be solved by military means alone."

He has promised to lift the state of emergency in the South-east and to review an irregular

system of 60,000 state-paid Kurdish "village guards". But his alternative proposals do little for civil rights and may turn the guards into a regular militia.

Newly released figures show that 19,000 people have been killed since the PKK launched its struggle in 1984 in the name of the Kurds, who number 15-20 per cent of Turkey's 65 million people. Until the end of 1995, 3,000 members of the se-

curity forces had been killed and a claimed 11,000 "terrorists". The rest were civilians. The PKK talks of a goal of federal and cultural rights, but few Turks believe that it has dropped its original goal of creating an independent Marxist state.

Support for the PKK appears to be decreasing inside Turkey. A Kurdish nationalist party endorsed by pro-PKK media won only 4 per cent of the

vote in the December elections, and a heavily-controlled semblance of normality has been imposed on most towns in the Kurdish South-east. But the PKK problem is unlikely to go away, however hard Turkey clamps down. It has an extremely effective financial base among the half-million-strong Kurdish diaspora in Europe and is aided by covert support from Syria and other Turkish rivals.

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Election jitters: Fear of student riots and a clash with the North cast shadow over polling day

Violence threatens Korean elections

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Seoul

In life, Roh Soo-sok was one of many, a clever law student at a famous private college, a handsome 20-year-old who spent his spare time playing traditional Korean drums. But overnight he became a secular saint, and the campus of Yonsei University, in the west of Seoul, became his shrine.

Huge banners draped over the university gates display poems eulogising him as "a young eagle". Students wear T-shirts bearing his image. Large paintings of a Christ-like Roh, his head wreathed in clouds, have been posted all over the campus, draped in black ribbons.

His coffin sits beneath an improvised tent, guarded around the clock by unsmiling youths with black headbands, white masks, and wooden batons.

There are offerings of incense and flowers and, carried around the campus by a spring breeze, a stronger and sweeter smell. Roh has been dead for almost two weeks and, despite the dry ice and the small electric cooler perched on top of his coffin, he is beginning to decompose.

South Korean students, once the most enthusiastic protesters in Asia, have been quiet recently. But, in an uneasy week for South Korea, with North Korean troops violating the armistice, and elections taking place tomorrow, there is again

a powerful sense of grievance. This morning, 12 days after his heart attack during a demonstration in Seoul, Mr Roh's coffin will be hoisted on to the shoulders of his comrades who will carry him through the streets to a service in front of City Hall, before driving overnight to a cemetery in the southern city of Kwangju. That is the plan. As everyone understands, South Korea's vigilant riot police have other ideas.

The elections to the South Korean assembly will take place tomorrow in an atmosphere of tension. Nine years after the first direct presidential elections, democracy is established in South Korea. But the country still labours under unique pressures, as the weekend incursions by troops from the Communist North has emphasised.

This year, President Kim Young-sam, the first head of state in four decades with no military background, robbed the students of their greatest complaints against him. After resisting for three years, he finally consented to prosecuting two presidential predecessors, the former generals Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, on charges of bribery and treason.

But with a year still to run, Mr Kim's New Korea Party stands to lose its parliamentary majority tomorrow. According to students at Yonsei, the death of Roh Soo-sok is a symbol of a



College hero: Seoul students guarding the coffin of Roh Soo-sok, who died in a demonstration

Photograph: AP

new intolerance fostered by the insecurity of the South Korean leadership.

One of the biggest questions marks hanging over the President is his indebtedness to the massive, illegal slush fund accumulated by presidents Chun and Roh. Opposition leaders say Mr Kim received dirty money for his 1988 election campaign. At the demonstration on which Roh collapsed and died, this was one of the complaints.

An autopsy concluded Mr Roh had died of heart failure, but his body bore numerous bruises apparently inflicted by the police. "I have been in many fights with the police before," said Hwang Sang-woo,

of the Yonsei Student Union, "but that time they were unprecedentedly harsh." He added: "Nothing will persuade me the police were not the direct cause of his death."

Students are not the only group to detect intolerance in the government. Foreign journalists in Seoul recently sent a protest letter to the President's aides after the correspondent for the *Australian Financial Review* was refused a visa for writing articles displeasing to the government. Although he was jailed as a dissident, the President's government continues to prosecute left-wing writers and academics under a draconian National Security Law.

On Monday, the police in Kwangju, the heartland of Korean anti-establishment protest, announced their resolve to "strongly confront" student protests. "To ensure the 15th parliamentary election is carried out in a happy, fair and open environment." But the students in Seoul are also resolved. Outside the Yonsei campus, a few yards from his decaying body, a banner bears a poem entitled "The Fall Of A Young Eagle":
Roh Soo-sok, who beat the drum
Came back to us dead, with his heart cold and numb
Dream sweetly, friend, beneath the white sheet,
As we take in our own hands the drum you once beat.

IN BRIEF

Yeltsin clashes with Poles over Nato

Moscow — President Boris Yeltsin and his visiting Polish counterpart, Aleksander Kwasniewski, failed at their first-ever summit yesterday to resolve disagreements over Poland's desire to join Nato. Mr Yeltsin said the sides simply agreed to disagree, adding that he did not have much hope of reaching a compromise. "We both agree that we need to continue our negotiations and look for a way of solving the problem of understanding between Nato and Russia," he said.

Tibet protest mars Chinese PM's visit

Paris — Over 200 French parliamentarians, seizing on a controversial official visit by the Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng, called on Peking to pull out of Tibet and said the UN should take up the issue. The deputies and senators accused China of being responsible for 1.5 million deaths since Peking occupied Tibet in 1950.

Finns starved of drink by protest strike

Helsinki — Most of Finland's 250 off licences closed yesterday when staff walked out in protest against planned cutbacks by the management. The one-day strike by 1,700 workers at the state-run alcohol monopoly, Alko, shut all but 15 smaller stores in rural areas.

Africa proclaimed nuclear-free zone

Cairo — The world's five recognised nuclear powers will sign a treaty in Cairo tomorrow declaring Africa a zone free of nuclear weapons and prohibiting nuclear testing on the continent, Egypt's Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

Germans pay more for their letters

Bonn — The German Post Office said yesterday that it plans to raise the cost of mailing a standard letter by 10 pfennig to 1.10 marks (about 50p).

Victory parade returns to Russia

Moscow — Russian soldiers will parade across Red Square to celebrate Victory Day on 9 May for the first time in six years, a military spokesman said yesterday. The tradition was suspended in 1991 as the Soviet Union neared collapse.

Court questions ban on Rushdie's tome

New Delhi — A court in Delhi ordered India's government to explain why it ordered a halt to the sale of Salman Rushdie's latest novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*.

China to exclude Patten from handover

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

Jeremy Hanley, the Foreign Minister responsible for Hong Kong, has confirmed that China wants Britain to agree to a discreet private ceremony to mark the end of colonial rule and Peking's resumption of sovereignty over the territory next year.

China originally insisted that it would not accept the Governor, Chris Patten, having any part in the handover ceremony because he is viewed as a "criminal through the ages". In private talks, Britain remained adamant that China could not

dictate who would participate on behalf of the outgoing sovereign power.

The talks have been going on for some months, but the level of the stalemate was only openly acknowledged in an interview with Mr Hanley which appeared in the *Southern Morning Post* yesterday. "We believe this is a unique moment in history that will be of great interest to the world, but China wants it not so open — a little more businesslike, shall we say," he was quoted as saying.

It is reliably understood that China simply wants officials to meet in a private room in Hong Kong's City Hall, a functional

building on the harbour side which is frequently used for official occasions such as the swearing-in of the Governor.

China seems to be planning a closed-door event at the stroke of midnight on 30 June 1997, followed by a lavish public celebration the next day once the British have left. Indeed, 1 July will become a permanent public holiday in Hong Kong to celebrate the resumption of Chinese rule.

Britain has made no secret of the fact that it is looking for a "dignified" ceremony at which it could hand over its last major colonial possession with some honour. Mr Patten does

not want the ceremony to reveal in the colonial legacy, but acknowledge more than a century and a half of British rule.

There has been constant speculation in the Hong Kong media about who would preside over the ceremony. Frequent references are made to Prince Charles, who has visited Hong Kong more often than any other senior royal.

It has also been suggested that China's patriarch, Deng Xiaoping, would fulfil his often-stated wish to visit Hong Kong after it returned to Chinese sovereignty, although reports about the poor state of his health make this unlikely.

China's determination to have nothing to do with Mr Patten, who is held responsible for introducing democratic reforms hated by China, has reached such a pitch that elaborate precautions are taken to ensure that no Chinese official even attends any of the numerous events at which the Governor is present.

Lu Ping, China's most senior official responsible for Hong Kong affairs, will be making one of his rare visits to the territory later this week.

He has studiously ignored Mr Patten's offer of a meeting and has so far declined to meet any other government officials.

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It all begins in the classroom

Easter teacher union conferences are rarely enlightened occasions. They are, in their way, mirrors of education debates in Parliament. They ring old, cracked bells, fighting the battles of the day before yesterday and ignoring the opportunities and challenges of the future. They ignore, in other words, the children. And yet, this spring, there is a prevalent sense that the urgency of classroom improvement has become a focus of national agreement.

After the tumult of change in recent years, there is a glimmering of national consensus on education. It centres on the need, recognised by teachers, parents and politicians alike, to make improved classroom teaching the beginning and end of education policy. Recent speeches by Gillian Shepherd, the Education Secretary, and her Labour shadow, David Blunkett, have exuded moderation. Stripped of ritual obeisance to their parties' sacred cows (comprehensives and choice), they have, in fact, been variations on the same theme: improvement starts in the classroom.

It was not just Mr Blunkett's effort to sign Labour up to private finance for schools when he spoke to the NUT the other day. Nor was it Mrs Shepherd's discovery, after the rhetorical extremism of her predecessor John Patten, that teachers have to be co-opted rather than battered. They both agree that the structure of the schools, even how they are financed, matters less than how minds are shaped, facts and techniques learnt and how the achievement of pupils is assessed and registered.

The broad line of agreement says: let us stick with common secondary schools for the majority at 11-plus and focus instead on the qualities of the pupils coming into them and the skills and attitudes of the pupils completing a core curriculum at age 16. Other things, such as nursery provision, the shape of the 16-19

course offering and the need to refashion vocational education – these are important. But what is taught and how it is assessed matter more than where.

Most people see that the national curriculum needs to be pared back to a core of numeracy and literacy, that pupils need to be regularly tested. Who now dissects from the national objective of striving to make all 16-year-olds better readers, better users of the languages of maths, better thinkers, better equipped to make a living and go forward to learn more in this ever-changing world?

That ambition can only be realised at the chalkface by dedicated teachers. They need to be backed up (although this will all too often be an aspiration rather than a reality) by parental enthusiasm. Their training ought not to stop, or even start, in specialist training colleges but rely instead on the experience of accomplished educators.

Good teachers need good inspectors, whose voice has to be much more nuanced and emollient than the one Chris Woodhead of the Office of Educational Standards has been using lately. Inspectors, themselves at the acme of professionalism, should be supporting and nurturing good teaching (and so eliminating bad). There is no need for them to behave like a gang of heavy-booted policemen out to maximise their convictions.

Teaching has, once again, to become a dignified activity, carried out by professionals. That professionalism ought to be captured by the creation of a general teaching council, akin to the General Medical Council, is long overdue. The amount teachers get paid has to be correlated with their classroom performance and both of those with how the public esteems them. There is now solid agreement, across the parties, across the country, that pay, performance and esteem should all now be rising.

The need to prevent another Chernobyl

The explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power station a decade ago was a modern horror. According to the World Health Organisation, the total amount of radioactivity released in the disaster was 200 times more than the combined fallout from the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The precise death toll will never be known, though Western scientists believe many thousands will eventually die because they suffered exposure to radiation.

Given these facts, why, as the 10th anniversary of the disaster approaches, does the Chernobyl plant remain open? Not only that, but 15 Chernobyl-style reactors continue to operate in the former Soviet Union – 11 in Russia and two each in Ukraine and Lithuania. The International Atomic Energy Agency has said clearly that Chernobyl-style RBMK reactors represent a much greater safety risk than other types used in nuclear power generation. Most Western nuclear experts regard the RBMK, an exclusively Soviet model, as inherently unstable.

Design flaws were only part of the explanation for the Chernobyl disaster. The other was the fact that, in an operation which still boggles the mind, technicians at the plant were conducting experiments in which safety systems were shut down. How far have safety procedures improved since then? Not far

enough. Last November, fuel rods were removed from one of Chernobyl's two working reactors. Their hermetic seal was broken and an employee was exposed to radiation.

Despite compelling arguments for closing down Chernobyl, there is official resistance. Ukraine authorities say the plant supplies 7 per cent of the country's energy and provides jobs for 30,000 people. They contend, unconvincingly, that Chernobyl has enjoyed an excellent, accident-free record in recent years. Since the government has in fact promised to close the plant by 2000 – a pledge repeated yesterday – it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the real reason for Ukrainian procrastination is a desire to extract as much money as possible from the West to cover the costs involved.

The Group of Seven industrialised countries has offered about £2bn in aid. That is a generous sum. If the West is to offer more, the Ukrainian authorities need to show they are serious about closing the plant – ideally, before 2000. What is needed is a programme for repairing and eventually shutting down every one of these Chernobyl-type reactors. The financial costs will be high. Yet at a time when relations between the West and Russia have hit choppy water, making a well-financed programme of closing the remaining reactors could be made the basis of renewing trust.

No offence, existentially speaking

A most extraordinary case is going on in the High Court in which a motorist is being prosecuted for more than 1,000 parking offences. Here is an extract from yesterday's proceedings.

Counsel: Can you tell us what your name is?

Defendant: Yes, I can.

Counsel: Then please do so.

Defendant: My name is Sidney Delba, I am 46 years old, I work as a chartered accountant, I am married with two children, I like country and western music, and I am not ashamed of it.

Judge: Thank you, Mr Delba. Please confine yourself to answering the question. That is all you need to do in a British court of law.

Defendant: Thank you, my lord.

Counsel: Now, Mr Delba, can you tell us what happened on the afternoon of 16 July 1995?

Defendant: Yes, I can.

[A long pause]

Judge: Well, will you therefore do so?

Defendant: Do so what, my lord?

Judge: Tell us what happened on the afternoon of 16 July 1995?

Defendant: Of course, my lord. I did not know that learned counsel wanted me to tell you. All I knew



MILES KINGSTON

was that he asked if I was able to tell him. "Can you tell us ...?" he asked. "Yes, I can," I said. Having told him of my ability to do so, I thought my answer had come to an end. Bearing in mind your lordship's advice ...

Judge: Listen to me, you little whelp. There are many people like you who have sought to make fun of British justice. And it is very easy. We wear ridiculous clothes, we wear laughable wigs and we talk in a kind of English that has never been heard in the street. We know all that. We make fun of it ourselves. So when someone like you comes along and does the same, we are not impressed. Are you with me, chuck?

Defendant: Yes, my lord.

Counsel: Now, can you tell us what happened on the afternoon of 16 July 1995?

Defendant: Yes – I parked my car in Kensington High Street in London.

Counsel: And when did you return to pick it up? The same day?

Defendant: No.

Counsel: When, then?

Defendant: I returned to pick it up two years later.

Counsel: Was it still there?

Defendant: In essence, yes.

Counsel: Could you explain to the court what you mean by in essence?

Defendant: I mean it in the Sartrean sense.

Counsel: Could explain to the court what the Sartrean sense of essence is?

Defendant: No.

Judge: Why not, Mr Delba?

Defendant: My lord, Jean-Paul Sartre wrote several long books trying to explain the same thing, such as his seminal work *Being and Nothingness*, and failed to clear it up, so I hardly feel that in a couple of minutes here I shall achieve what Sartre failed to do in his lifetime.

Judge: Then why did you invoke the Froggy philosopher in the first place?

Defendant: Because, my lord, when I saw the condition of my car after two years, when I saw what the rain and the weather had done to it, and

the vandals of London W8, and the aphids descending from the lime trees above, I suddenly felt for the time what Sartre meant by *Being and Nothingness*. My car existed, yes, but its car qualities, its essential carness, had gone.

Judge: I don't know what you're talking about.

Defendant: This is quite a common initial reaction to existential thinking, my lord.

Counsel: So, to sum up, you left your car for two years in a parking place in Kensington and then, when you came to collect it, left it there?

Defendant: Yes.

Counsel: Did you not end up owing hundreds of pounds in parking fines?

Defendant: No. I had parked in a Disabled Only parking space.

Judge: Ah! And are you, in fact, disabled?

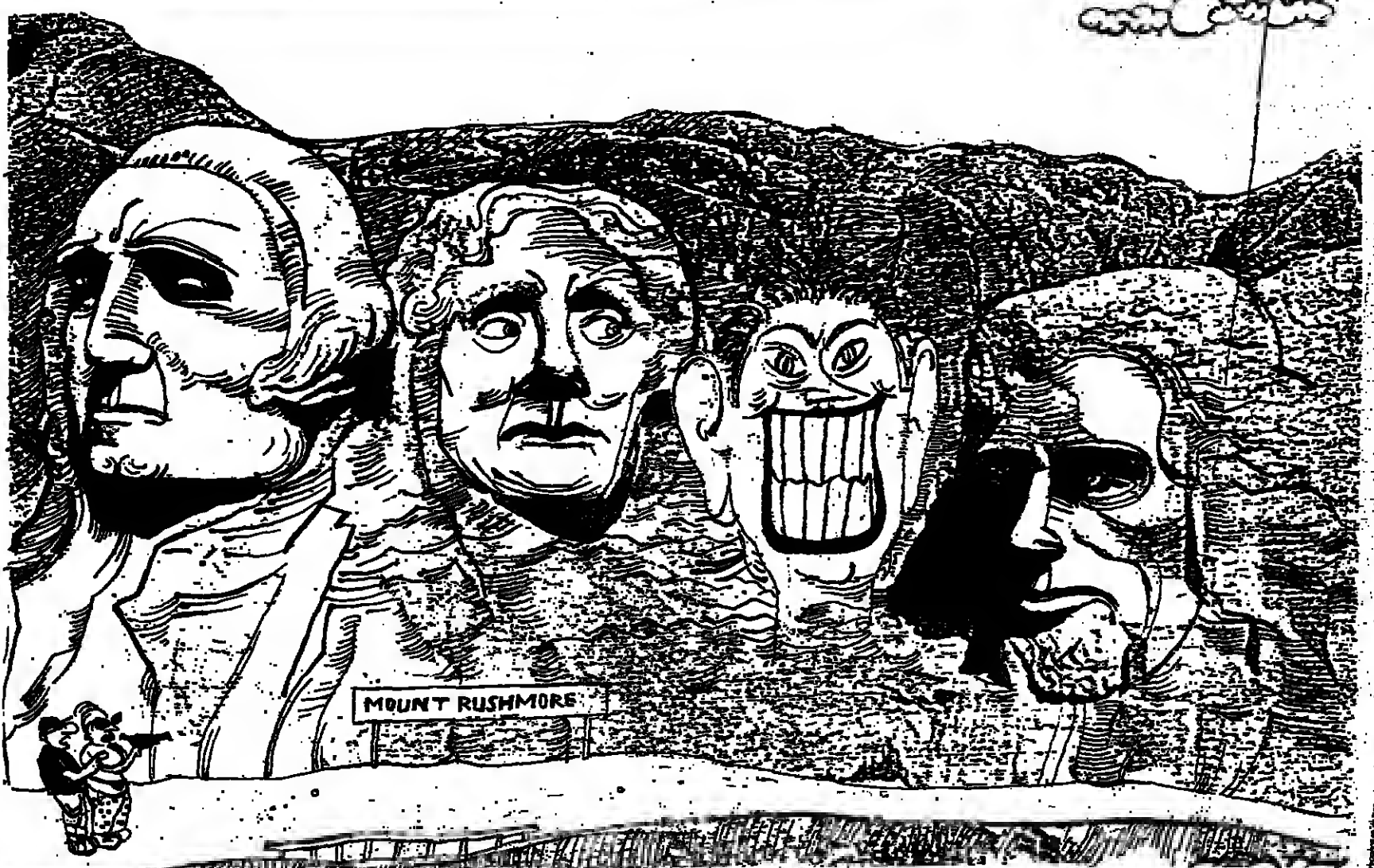
Defendant: In essence, yes.

Judge: In what sense?

Defendant: In a Heideggerian sense, my lord.

Judge: Lord save us. Let us adjourn the court for an hour while I get some fresh air and read some PG Wodehouse to regain my sanity.

More of this fascinating case tomorrow.



'Gee honey, who's that?'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Christians bring honesty to Westminster

Sir: Your suggestion that a true Christian could not play a full part in politics ("Anyone can play Bible games", 8 April) denies the reality of any Christian's daily life.

Political service does of course demand compromise but what family or business career does not also require regular surrendering of will to others' preferences?

A Christian politician should not compromise essential principles but must always be ready to be flexible over tactics. For example, a Christian may want to limit access to abortion but realising that the current parliament is not ready for such legislation may prefer to press for an extension of adoption rights to ensure full care for babies carried to full term.

Today's political landscape requires more Christian involvement and I hope that believers would bring a sense of honesty and probity that Westminster is accused of lacking. Parliament as a whole would benefit if Members attacked each other less and focused on policy. All evidence suggests the public would appreciate this as well. Tony Blair could make a start by being a little bit more generous to other Christians who have been led by the Holy Spirit into other parties.

TIM MONTGOMERIE
Director of Fellowship
Conservative Christian Fellowship
London, N2

Sir: So no true Christian would survive in politics (8 April). So much for the many members of the Lords and Commons who have been sincere followers of

Christ and served their parties and the country with distinction.

One might as well say that no true Christian could survive in the City of London or in the boardroom of a major company because difficult decisions have to be made in grey areas at the limits of what is legally possible. If a person is a Christian they will take that faith with them into all areas of their life, it will govern their attitudes, inform their thought and motivate their actions.

Our culture has been formed out of the contribution of many such people. There will be many reasons why a person is drawn to a political party but to assume that a person of faith should not take that faith into account in the process or that he should be silent about his underlying motivations is a nonsense.

STUART MUSTOW
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands

Sir: "What is truth?" said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer. ("Bacon: *Of Truth*"). You are probably right to say (leading article, 8 April) that Tony Blair is taking a risk in playing the Christian card (if that is what he has done) but to say that "no true Christian, one who actually lived a life of love and self-sacrifice, would survive in politics" is not only gloomy but also muddled thinking.

What is a true Christian? You seem to be proposing a definition and then saying that this cannot be attempted in the hurry-burry of life.

Many of us would say that, on

the contrary, that must be its *raison d'être*. Tony Blair, Ann Widdecombe and all the rest of us will mix success with failure, but we must keep the ideal before us and know that the essence of repentance and forgiveness is that we may go on and on with the cycle and so progress is made. Otherwise we may as well give up and then it is not only the political outlook that will be truly without hope.

THE REV BEN HOPKINSON
Stainton, Middlesbrough

Sir: On 9 April, 51 years ago, young Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged in a Nazi concentration camp. For Bonhoeffer, Christian theology conspiring to murder the head of the German state, the question of political involvement leading to "muddled hands and moral ambiguity" (leading article, 8 April) was deeply relevant.

The ultimate question for a responsible person to ask is not how he is to extricate himself heroically from the affair, but how the coming generation is to live. It is only from this question, with its responsibility towards history, that fruitful solutions can come, even if for the time being they are very humiliating.

(*After 10 Years*, 1942).

The point is not that political murder is ever justified outside the most extreme boundary situation, but that what constitutes a true Christian, one who actually lives a life of love and self-sacrifice, is more complicated than the theology of your leading article allows.

THE REV DOUGLAS DETTMER
Exeter, Devon

Nightmares of the meat trade

Sir: In view of the panic over BSE, what surprises me is that more people are not made unwell through the consumption of beef and its by-products.

A number of years ago I worked in various capacities for a meat packer who supplied a major retailer of frozen foods.

Working conditions could be charitably described as ghastly, but I recall the following incidents with particular affection:

1) A butcher chopped his finger off while cutting meat. The "slab" was wiped down with a damp cloth, while the missing digit was located amongst the joints and popped in a brown bag to accompany the butcher to the local hospital.

2) Mince was processed and packed in different sections of the factory; the only route from one to the other was along the public highway. A "dolly" containing six trays of mince, each weighing about 25lbs, toppled over in the road and was scraped up and

packed immediately for distribution.

3) Overall were changed on weekly basis, but after one day were coated with grease and meat and smelt awful. The only exception was the day the managing director of our main customer visited the factory, when clean overalls were given out the morning and had to be returned after the visit.

4) The "dolloes" containing mince and minced meat for food were not labelled on any occasion and a guess made as to which was which.

5) Meat "on the turn" was routinely chosen for export to Germany on the basis that if it was off, we could blame the halibut. If the meat had "turned", it was spiced with a detergent to disguise the smell.

Come to think of it, as there have been few BSE cases in Germany, perhaps the detergent is the antidote!

I M DAVIES DINES
Leicester

High price of techno-farming

Sir: The costly side-effects of agrotechnical farming and the adulteration of our food go even deeper than your coverage acknowledges ("Can British farming go green?", 9 April).

The new technofix, genetic engineering, will soon be obliging us to buy soya bean and cooking oils which have been genetically modified for herbicide resistance. In all probability, these genes have already escaped from freely pollinating crops such as oilseed rape into their wild relatives growing in the hedgerows. This same resistance will also be transferred into related weed varieties, which will render the original herbicides useless.

Meanwhile, "conventional" herbicides are leaving fields of maize stubble denuded of protective ground cover throughout the winter months and sluicing huge amounts of herbicide-laced topsoil into our rivers. These same chemicals then enter our drinking-water supplies.

MARTIN HUGHES-JONES
Mid Devon Green Party
Tiverton, Devon

Food from the global greenhouse

Sir: The articles in part three of "Our scorched earth" (2 April) take a very one-sided view of the role of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. There is no mention that carbon dioxide is, with water, the main food of green plants, and that increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air increases the rate of growth of plants.

There is no mention also of the fact that raising temperature in general increases rate of growth. So, although a rise of sea level, if it takes place, would take land out of cultivation, the productivity of the remainder should be increased.

Instead of regarding carbon dioxide as a poison it would be more sensible to try to ascertain what is its optimum concentration in the air. Have we any reason to think that the present level is ideal? Is it not possible that an equilibrium could be struck at a higher level with more production of carbon dioxide being balanced by higher extraction by the quicker-growing plants, producing more food?

DR ROGER JAMES
Southsea, Hampshire

Poles were Holocaust victims too

Sir: Anyone without a detailed knowledge of the history of the Second World War, on reading your editorial (8 April) would gain the impression that the Poles were second only to the Nazis in their determination to destroy the Jewish people. What a gross calumny. It is too often forgotten that the Poles (as a Slavonic people) were also categorised by the Nazis as sub-human and as a result millions of Christian Poles met their deaths in Auschwitz alongside their Jewish compatriots.

Anti-Semitism undoubtedly existed in Poland before the war, but it was also by no means unknown in other European

countries, Britain included. Who then can be complacent enough to be certain of their integrity in a country broken and ravaged by Nazi occupation? We were fortunate here in Britain – we were never put to that test.

Of course the march of the Polish skinheads was a disgusting exhibition which should have been roundly condemned by the Polish government and clergy. But to use these facts to suggest wholesale national involvement in the Holocaust is a repugnant defamation of a courageous and long-suffering nation.

SUSAN JAROS
Melrose, Roxburghshire

Motor mouth

Sir: Once again (Letters, 6 April) a representative of the AA has been given the opportunity of pronouncing on transport policy. There is a widespread misconception that the views of the AA

reflect those of its members, who, in fact, have no means of influencing its pronouncements. The AA should stick to its proper function of helping motorists in trouble.

JOHN DE
Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

4/21/2012

Barristers: a law unto themselves

In fighting to preserve its courtroom monopoly, the Bar stands firmly in the way of needed reforms

Behind the scenes a bloody battle is taking place between two arms of the law – solicitors versus barristers. The Bar sees it as a fight for its very survival, while solicitors see themselves as a David fighting a Goliath of restrictive practice. This time, at least, right is on the side of the solicitors. Backed by the Director-General of Fair Trading, they are seeking to put an end to the barristers' monopoly of representing clients in higher courts. They want "employed" barristers and solicitors to have equal rights of audience.

Examples of current practice: a specialist solicitor beavering away in the fire regulations department devotes his whole life to prosecuting restaurants and offices. A boring job, perhaps, but he knows his onions like no one else. He can appear in the magistrates' court as prosecutor, but when it comes to an appeal he has to brief a private barrister who probably knows next to nothing about fire regulations. He is unlikely even to speak to the barrister who takes over. Even if he does, there is a 50-50 chance that some other barrister will turn up in court on the day.

If the fate of the fire regulator does not impress, look at the Crown Prosecution Service, which is the main bone of contention, as it employs 650 barristers and 1,750 solicitors, none of whom can appear in any higher court. A CPS lawyer, possibly herself a barrister, makes the crucial decision to prosecute, draws up the brief, selects witnesses and shapes the case. But if it goes to jury,

she has to hand it over to some unknown, unnamed and unseen barrister, who has to start at the very beginning. The CPS spends £70m a year on employing private barristers. CPS lawyers cannot even turn up in court to read out a pro forma prosecution where the defendant is pleading guilty.

Next example: a highly complex case is prepared by a company's lawyers, the American MD flies in to discuss it with his in-house lawyers, but he is dumbfounded when told that his own lawyers cannot take the case to court. An outside barrister will have to be briefed and the company may not even know which barrister will be available on the day.

However, the Bar Council is fighting to hold on to this monopoly and it looks almost certain to succeed. Until now, using all its well-honed delaying, filibustering and heel-dragging techniques, it has caused six years to pass since Parliament voted for reform of this archaic system. In 1990, Parliament wisely passed the Courts and Legal Services Act to find "new and better ways" of providing legal services, which included letting more solicitors appear in court. A committee was set up to advise and, although much delayed by barristers' rear-guard action, finally reported last autumn. (It was split down the middle until the chairman, a judge and therefore a barrister, threw his casting vote with the barristers, to the fury of the solicitors.) Since then, the four senior judges



POLLY TOYNEE

Why do barristers feel the need for special protection?

and the Lord Chancellor have been deliberating (very slowly). Each one of them has a veto on reform, so it will take just one to refuse for it to fail. Last week, the *Independent* revealed that Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, is strongly defending barristers' exclusive rights. That means the judges will probably overrule Parliament's clear intent to widen rights of audience. "Their blocking of the will of Parliament to make this reform is little short of a public scandal," says Walter Merricks of the Law Society.

The former chairman of the Bar, Peter Goldsmith QC, as you would expect, makes a fine list of defending barristers. "Though I suppose," he said a trifle wearily, "you may be minded to accuse the Bar of defend-

ing restrictive practices?" He talked loftily of the need for checks and balances in a democratic society, while I tried to put aside baser thoughts of barristers' cheques and bank balances.

"The citizen needs protection against the over-mighty state," he said. "The more serious cases need an independent mind as a safeguard against abuse." It is, he said, a matter of independence and integrity. I tried not to think of the integrity of the independent barristers' minds who prosecuted the Guildford Four and Judith Ward or who argued in court that the Matrix Churchill defendants had no right of access to crucial government documents.

In reality, all barristers and solicitors are employed, whether by the day on the tax rank, or by annual salary. Their independence of mind resides within their own integrity. As David Pannick QC has written, there are plenty of employed lawyers who spend their time telling their employers unwelcome legal truths, while some other "independent" barristers may earn their money telling clients what they want to hear.

I am not a conspiracy theorist, but the conspiracy of the Bar is in the very air of government, an instinctive breathing together of the fraternity in high places. Who would gain most by letting employed lawyers into court? The Treasury would save millions in all government departments that employ lawyers. But where is the voice of the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke QC?

The Home Office has a keen interest, but the voice of Michael Howard QC is also silent. The Attorney General, as head of the CPS, should be keenly interested. He has said not a word, but then he is also ex-officio Leader of the Bar. Even the Solicitor-General is a barrister, again strangely silent. Every permanent secretary of the Lord Chancellor's Department has always been a lawyer. Barbara Mills QC, the Director of Public Prosecutions, who stands to gain most in her budget, is a barrister and hardly conspicuous for her public protest in this matter.

In the Commons there are 29 solicitors overpowered by 54 barristers. If we had a tradition that all health ministers should be doctors, would we ever have had any NHS reform unfavourable to doctors?

This is a modest reform, designed to make run of the mill cases faster and cheaper. The brightest and best specialist freelance advocates, the Carmans, Lesters, Mansells, Kennedys and Scriveners, will always be in hot demand. But why can the market not be left to operate freely? Why do barristers feel the need for special protection, denying clients the right to choose who shall represent them. In which courts and at what price?

The judges will have to pronounce soon. They look as if they will vote to protect their own. If so, will an incoming Labour prime minister, married to a QC, promise to break the iron grip of the Bar?

Hey, he's OK, he's one of us

Tony Blair, not BSE, is now the most popular British subject for US chat shows, writes John Carlin

Tony Blair, who begins a three-day visit to the United States today, has timed his visit to perfection. American interest in Britain seldom ranges beyond Emma Thompson and the Royal Family, but the ins and outs of the Mad Cow drama have seized the national imagination to such a degree that people have actually started to take something resembling a glimmer of interest in British politics.

The late night TV talk shows, faithful measures of the lowest common denominator of American popular wisdom, have been tapping a rich vein in Mad Cow jokes. Yesterday, a dentist from Syracuse, New York State, faxed six delicious pages on cannibalism among cows to the *Independent* office in Washington. The man on the Arlington omnibus has, it seems, gone beyond speculation on the science of bovine dementia and is beginning to wonder what the political fall-out in Britain will be, whether the days of John Major (suddenly almost as famous as Hugh Grant) might be numbered.

Enter Tony Blair, hitherto an object of curiosity among Washington insiders, who besides meeting with Boutros Boutros Ghali, breakfasting with Henry Kissinger and chatting with President Clinton, will be making his face known in half the households in the country when he appears on Thursday on ABC's *Good Morning America*. (No prizes for guessing the issue that will dominate the interviewers' agenda.)

The last time a Labour leader made an official visit to the US was in July 1990. Neil Kinnock told reporters he felt "10 foot tall" after a youngster had recognised him on a Manhattan street. He felt even better after President Bush talked to him politely and at length – President Reagan had given him a frosty 20 minutes in 1987 – and the American press wrote that he was a nice fellow who just might make it to Downing Street.

A cover story on Mr Blair in the *New Yorker* in February was headlined simply "The Next Prime Minister". Interviews published in the last week in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* have drawn approving attention to Mr Blair's "moderation". He is not a wild-eyed radical like some of his cloth-capped Labour forebears, the sub-text went, he is not suspiciously pinko: he talks our language, he's one of us.

Furthermore, in a country where the greatest insult is to be called a "loser", Mr Blair has the air of a man who will flatten John Major at the next election.

It is in Washington, of course, that he will come under the closest scrutiny. His first engagement in the capital will be a cocktail party on Thursday evening at the home of Sidney Blumenthal, the author of the *New Yorker's* flattering February profile. Among the guests will be senior members of the Clinton Administration and eminences of the Washington press corps.

Mr Blumenthal said there was "tremendous" interest in

Interviews have drawn approving attention to Mr Blair's 'moderation'

Mr Blair – primarily because of the perception that Mr Blair is a sort of Son of Clinton, or perhaps rather Clinton's smart younger cousin, and because of the analogies between the New Democrats and new Labour.

"This is a story of somebody who takes control of a political party and tries to remake it in his own image," Mr Blumenthal said. "Clinton tried to do it first so people are very interested to see how Blair is going about it."

When the two men meet in the White House on Friday morning they are likely, against the backdrop of their looming election battles against conservative opponents, to exchange ideas on how to market a progressive agenda at a time when people are increasingly suspicious of "big government".

Shared political challenges, similarity of styles and a common distaste for John Major – the President has not forgotten the Conservative Party's unsavoury support of George Bush in the 1992 election – should make for good chemistry.

"While Clinton's relationship with Major has smoothed out a bit after a rough beginning," Mr Blumenthal said, "the potential is there in 1997 for a President Clinton and a Prime Minister Blair to enjoy the kind of close, mutually supportive relationship we saw in Reagan and Thatcher, a relationship which – if Blair restores Britain's position in Europe – could only boost Britain's international influence."

Go green? Let us spray...

Yesterday we asked, can British farming switch to organic methods? Today, Siôn Roberts and Tom Maher argue the case for organic agriculture.



Giving nature a helping hand? It would be folly to require all farms to convert to organic systems of production

Photograph: Robert Brook/Environmental Picture Library

Yesterday's *Independent* asked whether a radical attempt to redefine the label attached to British agriculture as the "safest and the greenest" is the only way to ensure the competitiveness of our agricultural industry. In the present climate following the BSE scare many people are asking a similar question. The answer, at least in part, is almost certainly yes, but this does not mean that all of Britain's farms should tomorrow switch to organic production.

The issue should not be polarised. It is not simply a question of whether to change farming techniques or whether organic farming alone is the answer to the industry's problems. Rather, supplying food of the quality and at the price that consumers demand is paramount. Organic food production undoubtedly plays a part but it represents only a part of a diverse and changing industry.

There is not, and never will be, one national label for all British agricultural produce. In fact one of the greatest assets of the British agricultural industry is the very diversity that exists within it. Consumers are looking for value for money when they buy food but value for money for one consumer may mean something completely different to another.

Clearly, the consumer wants food that is safe at a reasonable price but after that simple tenet is established, consumer responses become more complex and varied and at times contradictory. Consumers' demands in relation to such factors as colour, shape and refrigerator life often rest uneasily alongside the marketing of organic produce, where the shape and size

may not conform to their exacting standards. In surveys many consumers cite their preference for extensively farmed produce over intensively farmed. Yet over the last 10 years it is the consumption of poultry, which tends to be more intensively produced, which has increased by more than 30 per cent in the UK during a period when total meat consumption has declined.

Although a certain greening of UK consumer tastes over the 1990s is detectable, the extent to which this has swept over the entire population is questionable. Organic produce is only a small niche market. British farmers should be encouraged to fill this mar-

ket but this is an entirely different proposition from switching all UK agriculture to organic production.

Surveys highlight the importance consumers attribute to convenience, ease of parking and the time needed to prepare food. Organic food is well down the list of priorities; so much so that Marks & Spencer, for example, no longer stocks organic products because of weak consumer demand.

Much of UK agriculture, while not actually organic, is already produced using very extensive farming meth-

ods. This includes the traditionally farmed large upland areas, UK farmers have also responded in their uptake of environmental schemes and the UK has been at the forefront in Europe in developing environmentally sensitive areas where farmers adjust their production techniques to enhance the environment.

The UK has been the in the forefront of introducing animal welfare legislation in the EU – it is banning stalls and tethering in the pig industry ahead of other EU countries. It will be interesting to see whether the UK consumer will choose British bacon over Danish bacon because of the UK's animal welfare legislation – to date all the evidence suggests that it is relative prices and intrinsic quality that will determine UK market share.

There is a danger that switching to the production of strictly organic food in the narrowest sense would not just damage the UK's share of the food market but place this country's farm produce outside the income range of the poorer sections of our society. While a small number of consumers are willing to pay a premium for organically produced products – thus enabling organic farmers to remain in business – it seems inconceivable that all consumers would be willing to pay this same premium. On average, UK consumers spend around 11 per cent of total consumer expenditure on household food but for poorer sections of society, particularly pensioners and unemployed, this proportion is a lot higher.

What then would be the risks to the British agricultural industry of a radical shift to widespread organic pro-

duction? First, the quantity produced would fall significantly. For example organic cereal yields are some 35 per cent lower than conventional ones – shifting UK agriculture to organic production would drastically reduce the production of home-grown food and as a consequence considerably worsen the food trade deficit.

Indeed how would British farmers compete with farmers from other countries, both on world export markets and within our own market? Farmers are being continually encouraged to become more competitive and the protection traditionally afforded them is slowly being removed. If British agriculture

becomes organic it will only survive against this competition, if it can truly differentiate its product from that produced elsewhere and then charge a premium price for it. This may be achieved in some segments of the market but would be all but impossible across the board.

It is also doubtful that such a radical change would be sustainable at a national level. Organic production relies on the use of organic fertilisers or animal waste. If organic fertilisers were not used, there would be a large increase in the demand for

organic ones. But without a huge increase in the population of farm animals, for which there would be no conceivable consumer demand, the supply of animal manure simply does not exist. The soil would be slowly depleted.

Which direction then should British agriculture take? We have highlighted the move to incorporate environmental thinking and animal welfare standards into agricultural policy making in recent years, a move in which the UK has been very much to the forefront.

From the UK farmer's perspective it is important that the changes he is encouraged to undertake are endorsed by consumer behaviour. This means that consumers actively choose UK pig meat ahead of pig meat produced from systems banned in the UK and that our grazing livestock systems, which are already the most extensive in the EU, are favoured by the consuming public.

In simple terms, any changes to the UK's farming practices must be market-led. To date, while there is a niche for organically produced food with a price premium, UK farmers will quite happily endeavour to meet that demand. But it would be folly, however, if all or even the generality of the UK's farmers were forced to switch entirely over to organic systems of production – that would not just place UK farmers in an uncompetitive position but require them to produce a product for which there was no widespread demand.

The writers are economists with the National Farmers' Union.

Come on supermarkets, give us those spotty apples

Organic food is too hard to find, says Jeanette Longfield

Going through the revolving doors of the supermarkets I am sucked into a weird world of plastic-wrapped, glossy-packed food products that seem to have no origin. The merchandise is simply there, on shelves. The shelves are supplied from store-rooms hidden behind plastic flapping doors. Beyond that... nothing. That was before the BSE row began. Now I am a little wiser. Now I have learnt what some farmers were feeding their livestock, and what goes on inside an abattoir. Now I have learnt that boiled animal bones were used for medicines, sweets, Easter eggs and take-up; that tomato paste is made

with genetically modified organisms; that antibiotics are used routinely in animal feed to promote growth.

I want to do something to make sure my food is produced humanely, without damaging the environment, with no unnecessary additives or bizarre ingredients or hi-tech processes, and that it is fresh, safe and nutritious. I wander, with relief, over to the organic food section. Only to find that I need to take out a mortgage for a pound of minced meat, and I have a meagre two choices of apple

varieties, and that one of those looks rather, well, sad.

I've heard about special schemes where the local organic farmer delivers boxes of fresh goodies to your door each week. I've also heard that, at certain times of the year, all you get is spuds and cabbage, and I'm not sure I like bubble and squeak that much. I could grow my own I suppose. The satisfaction of growing your own broccoli, cutting the florets in the garden to put straight into a pot of boiling water in the kitchen. Cheap, fresh and

organic. But then I've got cats, and doesn't what cats do in the garden do unspeakably toxic things to your veg?

So it's back to the plastic, conventional world of agro-chemically produced, ecosphere-damaging, cruel Frankenfoods?

Not for me. Never mind that organic meat costs more. I'll just buy less of it. Never mind that organic fruit and veg looks a bit odd. I'll get used to it and, anyway, it's tasty. I'll join one of those organic delivery schemes – I'm sure Delia has lots of wonderful

recipes for cabbage, and I'm going to put those broccoli seeds in this week-end. And just for good measure, I'll be sending my cheque to a charity campaigning for action.

In the meantime, I shall march through those supermarket revolving doors and ask to see the manager. I want food with character, flavour and a known pedigree – I want food I can trust. Perhaps, as I walk out, I'll say: "I shall shop elsewhere."

The writer is co-ordinator of the National Food Alliance, an umbrella body for voluntary organisations and charities, but is writing in a personal capacity.

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Mixed bag: Industrial production disappoints while buying on the high street suggests growth in confidence among consumers

Output trend hits three-year low

CBI finds retail sales recovery in its 6th month

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The trend in industrial output in February was at its weakest since the exchange rate crisis in September 1992, government statisticians reported yesterday. The likelihood that manufacturing industry is firmly in recession is fuelled by the fact that the trend in industrial output has now been static for three months, while the trend in industrial output dropped from 0.5 per cent growth to zero for the first time since September 1992.

"Sitting on his hands might be the best approach at the moment," Mr Clarke is going to cut base rates, predicted Simon Briscoe, an economist at investment bank Nikko Europe. Manufacturing output was virtually flat in February. Its level in the latest three months was

0.5 per cent lower than the previous three months. Total industrial output was up 0.1 per cent during the same period. A rebound in energy production due to colder weather took it 0.4 per cent higher during the month.

The Office for National Statistics (replacing the CSO) said the trend in both manufacturing and total output was flat. Manufacturing has now been static for three months, while the trend in industrial output dropped from 0.5 per cent growth to zero for the first time since September 1992.

Analysts played down the significance of the weak figures, while admitting that they gave Mr Clarke an excuse to cut base rates if he wanted to. An expected cut in German interest rates would also help. Kevin Darlington at brokers Hoare Govett said: "The economy is poised between two

conflicting forces. Manufacturing is sluggish but the firmness of underlying demand is showing through. Last year's excess stock levels were being run down, he said.

Sean Shepley at investment bank CSFB said: "These figures tell us that demand was weak last year. It would be a mistake to set policy on the basis of a lagging indicator."

Barring an unexpectedly big jump in output in March, manufacturing output is likely to have fallen for two successive quarters. This would put it technically in recession, and could point to further job cuts in industry after a decline of 27,000 in January.

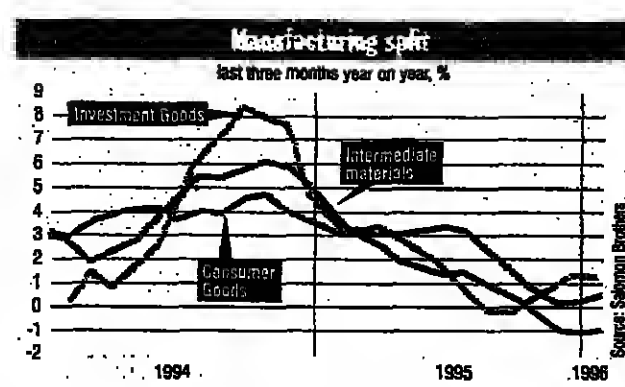
It would also mean a weak figure for GDP growth in the first quarter of this year, as manufacturing accounts for about a quarter of the economy. The Chancellor and Governor of the Bank of England have tended

to focus on the quarterly change in GDP in their policy discussions.

By the time they next meet on 8 May, the two men will have the preliminary estimate of first-quarter growth, which could show a smaller rise than the fourth quarter's 0.5 per cent.

The meeting will also come shortly before the publication of the Bank's next quarterly Inflation Report. This is expected to say, as the latest one does, that the Government is more likely than not to meet its inflation target.

Yesterday's figures showed faster growth in production of consumer durables, which rose 2.1 per cent in the latest three months. Output of both non-durable consumer goods and intermediate goods increased slightly. However, production of investment goods declined due to a drop in transport equip-



ment such as railway rolling stock and aerospace. There were mixed fortunes in manufacturing. Apart from the transport sector, there was a sharp decline in the output of the coke, petrol refining and nuclear power industries. The food, drink and tobacco industry has also been weak in recent months. Its output picked up in

February but could be affected by the beef scare in March and April.

On the other hand, trends in chemicals and engineering – the biggest component of manufacturing – have been stronger. Chemicals output rose 0.8 per cent in February to a new record, driven by pharmaceuticals and artificial fibres.

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The retail sales recovery continued for the sixth successive month in March, according to the latest survey from the Confederation of British Industry. This steady growth in sales is likely to be reflected in later official figures.

Although the increase in sales volumes was slightly lower than the previous month's, there was a big jump in the volume of orders placed with suppliers to the highest level for more than two years. Retailers expect a strong advance in April sales even though their high expectations for last month were disappointed.

Sadhir Jumanak, a CBI economist, said: "The continued expansion in the retail trade is encouraging as it suggests that consumers are becoming more confident and willing to spend more freely."

Further anecdotal evidence of the retail revival was provided by the latest weekly figures for John Lewis. The department store and Waitrose supermarket group said sales had been

dipped slightly to 42 per cent from the extremely buoyant 45 per cent in March.

Reflecting both the recent improvement in sales volumes and these optimistic expectations of the future trend, the balance increasing their orders with suppliers jumped to 21 per cent from 10 per cent in February.

A growing number of respondents think sales volumes are above average for the time of year. The strongest growth last month was in areas closest to the housing market. The hardware, china and DIY sector reported the biggest volume increase, followed by durable household goods. Sales of furniture and carpets were healthy but down on February's substantial increase.

There were also significant improvements in sales at book-sellers and clothing stores. Footwear and specialist food stores reported declines.

Further anecdotal evidence of the retail revival was provided by the latest weekly figures for John Lewis. The department store and Waitrose supermarket group said sales had been

"more than satisfactory", up 21.6 per cent in the nine weeks to 30 March compared with the same period a year earlier.

Panel says Clarke has little room for manoeuvre

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The Treasury's panel of independent advisers warned Chancellor Kenneth Clarke that he has almost no room for manoeuvre on interest rates or tax cuts this year.

In the first of their two reports this year, the six "wise persons"

argue that policy needs to be extremely cautious if the Government wants to hit its inflation target.

"Most of us do not think that the next move in interest rates should necessarily be downwards, and some of us feel that there is already or could soon be a good case for raising interest rates if the Government

is serious about achieving its inflation objective," the report, released yesterday, concludes. The exception was Professor Patrick Minford of Liverpool University, taking the minority view that the economy has plenty of spare capacity.

Similarly, only Professor Minford argued that there was scope for more than token tax

cuts of £2-£3bn in this year's Budget. Indeed, half of the panel's members suggested that either tax increases or further government spending cuts are necessary.

These recommendations are based on the Government's 2.5 per cent target for inflation excluding mortgage interest payments. The independent

economists do not think Mr Clarke can achieve both the inflation target and his forecast that GDP will grow by 3 per cent this year. The panel's average forecast for growth is 2.2 per cent, ranging from 1.8 to 2.5 per cent. The majority believe, in a subdued echo of the Chancellor's views, that the pace of growth will pick up during the

course of the year. Most reckon on this will allow unemployment to continue its decline, although not falling below 2 million on the claimant count measure until 1997.

The exception to this is Gavin Davies of Goldman Sachs, who thinks there could be a temporary rise in the jobless count.

US fears fail to affect City

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Shares in London shrugged off Monday's heavy falls in New York, with the FT-SE 100 index reversing early losses to close 3.0 points higher last night. That resilience put paid to fears that Wall Street's nerves would spill over onto European bourses and the American market itself held firm when it opened yesterday afternoon.

London was given a boost by a sluggish British manufacturing report which confirmed the continuing weakness of economic growth and rekindled hopes that interest rates could still have further to fall. British manufacturing output was unchanged in February and rose just 0.4 per cent from a year earlier. Industrial output, which includes utilities and mines, rose 0.4 per cent in February and 1.2 per cent year on year.

Attention had focused on the equity market because stronger than expected US pay-

roll figures last Friday served as a worrying reminder that the American economy was growing probably too fast to allow any further cuts in US rates. Wall Street fell 88 points on Monday, after a 130 point morning fall that looked dangerously like a re-run of the 170 point slump a month ago following bumper February employment figures.

News of an additional 140,000 non-farm jobs created in March – double the 70,000 consensus estimate – and a smaller than expected downward revision of the huge 705,000 February payroll increase to 624,000 confirmed the American economy was growing at a healthy pace.

The gilt market in London was harder hit with the yield on the benchmark 10-year government bond, an indicator of future interest rate expectations, rising 8 basis points to 8.11 per cent. In the US, the 30-year treasury bond ended a five-day slide.



Dealing with Wall Street's jitters: London held firm despite worries over the Dow's heavy fall on Monday

Swiss banking giants discuss £32bn merger

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Union Bank of Switzerland and CS Holding, two of the big three Swiss banks, announced yesterday that they were in discussions about a £32bn merger. Analysts believe at least 15,000 jobs in Switzerland and possibly hundreds of jobs in London are at risk if the deal, due to be discussed at a UBS board meeting on Thursday, goes ahead.

The international investment banking operations of UBS and CS Holding, parent of Credit Suisse, both have large numbers of staff in London, in the City and at Canary Wharf. Although the two would fit well on the corporate finance side there are thought to be

large overlaps on the debt trading and derivatives businesses of the two banks in London, which is bound to lead to rationalisation and job losses.

The proposal would also reshape Swiss banking, where the two groups have well over half of the domestic market, where there is substantial excess capacity.

Banking sources believe that estimates of 15,000 job losses within Switzerland could prove on the low side.

After a day of misunderstandings and confusions in the market that followed a speculative report in a Swiss newspaper, Union Bank of Switzerland spokeswoman Gertrud Eismann said a board meeting will take place this week to discuss a possible merger with CS Holding. There is to be an announcement by the end of the week.

Earlier CS Holding said a telephone conversation took place between CS Holding chairman Rainer Gut and UBS chairman Nikolaus Senn in which the possibility of discussing a merger between the two banks was "sounded out".

Ms Eismann confirmed that the telephone conversation took place. Mr Gut said "It's up to the UBS board of directors to make up its mind about the proposal." The discussions took place last week said UBS, but Ms Eismann refused to give any further details.

CS Holding's market value is SF 21.1bn (£12.4bn) and UBS is worth almost £20bn. However, a Lloyd's spokesman said yesterday: "We have

Lloyd's set to raise another £100m for names' settlement

NIC CICUTTI

Lloyd's of London, the beleaguered insurance market, looks set to increase the £2.8bn settlement it has offered to loss-making and litigating names, by raising a further £100m from brokers towards the package.

Hopes were also high among some names yesterday that a further sum of up to £300m might be available through a lower-than-expected costing of the Equitas plan, the re-insurance agency being set up to shoulder all liabilities for business underwritten up to 1992.

If the £1.9bn cost of Equitas were to be reduced, it could substantially cut the £100,000 cap placed on names' potential additional contributions to the agency.

However, a Lloyd's spokesman said yesterday: "We have

always said that the Equitas premium would be £1.9bn while the Department of Trade and Industry believes that it will be at least £1.5bn."

"There has been no detailed discussions with the DTI on the exact amount. There are some final number-crunching exercises to be done, which we can't do anything until the full DTI team is back and we discuss the matter with them."

Final bills for Equitas, which will cover the worst loss-making years and the potentially huge payouts from asbestos and pollution-related claims in the US, are expected at the end of May.

The deal with brokers, expected to be announced in the next few weeks, will fall short of the amount expected by many names, who are bailing to foot

the bill of more than £8bn in losses in the past five years.

Market sources said yesterday that any higher amount, which has to come out of future years' profits, would seriously affect the viability of the business.

Brokers are themselves expressing doubts about the precedent involved subsidising the market's previous losses, although they are prepared to invest to keep the business alive.

Under the terms of the agreement now being hammered out with brokers, they would be expected to contribute sums in proportion to the premiums each of them bring to the market.

The deal, likely to run for several years, could allow Lloyd's to juggle funds and add to the settlement package names must vote on at Lloyd's annual general meeting in July.

Society under fire for 'delays' over Robinson

NIC CICUTTI

Lawyers acting for Peter Robinson, the Woolwich chief executive forced to resign for alleged financial irregularities, yesterday criticised the building society for failing to provide them with details of his alleged misuse of resources.

DJ Freeman, the London law firm representing Mr Robinson, said it could not understand why there should be a two-week delay before it would receive written details of the allegations against him.

Irene Grieves, a spokeswoman for the firm, said: "One would assume that if he committed a series of improprieties so serious that they led to his resignation, they would already be in writing."

"It is hard to understand why the report supposedly compiled by the Woolwich's internal auditors is not being made available to us."

Mr Robinson, 54, was ousted by the society a week ago, barely three months after taking up his post as chief executive, after working at the Woolwich for about 32 years.

His departure comes as the society prepares for a £3bn stock market flotation in August next year. More than 3.5 million savers are hoping to receive free shares worth about £800 each from the planned flotation.

Mr Robinson's resignation followed allegations that he misused society resources, including having decorating and gardening work carried out at his £450,000 home in the village of Brasted in Kent.

He was also alleged to have authorised the use of a Range Rover for his family, plus other, so far unexplained, financial irregularities.

National Counties Building Society – which has just one branch – was yesterday forced to close its doors to a flood of investors desperate to open accounts with the society, writes Nic Cicutti.

It follows press reports that should the tiny society, based at Epsom, Surrey, be taken over its members could be in line for payouts worth up to £4,500 each.

John Milton, the society's general manager, said: "We have had very considerable interest and we have temporarily suspended the opening of accounts."

With just 6,500 borrowers and 16,000 savers, National Counties would never have been seen as a likely takeover target – until last week. Ranked the 30th largest society in the UK, it has reserves of more than £70m, which some experts believe would value it at about £125m.

Mr Robinson has steadfastly denied the allegations, claiming that he was the victim of a concerted smear attack masterminded by a "war office" at the society.

He blames disgruntled staff at Woolwich after he was forced to make a series of redundancies within the group, and is claiming compensation worth £600,000 for the sudden end to his two-year contract.

A society spokesman said yesterday: "Our lawyers are talking with Mr Robinson's and at the moment we have nothing more to add."

Meanwhile, the society yesterday denied rumours that it has entered into talks with Mike Jackson, chief executive at Birmingham Midshires, as a possible replacement.

STOCK MARKETS									
FT-SE 100									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Vol	Div	Yield (%)	Dividend
FTSE 100	3758.60	+3.00	+0.1	3771.30	3639.50	3.94			
FTSE 250	4377.10	-8.20	-0.2	4385.30	4015.30	3.39			
FTSE 350	1891.70	+0.40	+0.0	1891.70	1815.60	3.82			
FTSE Small Cap	2108.70	+0.06	+0.0	2108.70	1791.95	3.75			
FT All Share	1968.86	+0.33	+0.0	1968.86	1832.00	2.15			
New York	5588.22	-6.15	-0.1	5689.74	3832.00	2.15			
Tokyo	21744.17	+319.93	+1.5	21744.17	19734.70	0.721			
Hong Kong	11107.37	-32.51	-0.3	11594.89	10073.39	3.251			
Frankfurt	2503.26	+8.08	+0.3	2625.42	2253.88	1.961			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	5.84	6.41	8.12	8.45	8.21	8.45			
US	5.41	5.78	6.58	7.08	6.85	7.38			
Japan	0.53	1.00	3.23	3.56					
Germany	3.34	3.39	6.45	7.15	7.18				

Money Market Rates									
Overnight									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	5.84	6.41	8.12	8.45	8.21	8.45			
US	5.41	5.78	6.58	7.08	6.85	7.38			
Japan	0.53	1.00	3.23	3.56					
Germany	3.34	3.39	6.45	7.15	7.18				

Bond Yields									
Yield (%)									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	5.84	6.41	8.12	8.45	8.21	8.45			
US	5.41	5.78	6.58	7.08	6.85	7.38			
Japan	0.53	1.00	3.23	3.56					
Germany	3.34	3.39	6.45	7.15	7.18				

Main Price Changes									
Price (p) Change (p) % Change									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	151	8	4.1	Hambros	241	10	4.0		
US	115	4	3.6	Wall Street	457	17	3.5		
Japan	68	2	3.0	Cong	530	18	3.3		

CURRENCIES

The figure consists of three line charts, each showing a currency exchange rate over time. The x-axis for all charts is labeled 'MAY 1992'. The y-axis for each chart represents the exchange rate.

- £/\$:** The y-axis ranges from 1.40 to 1.60. The line starts at approximately 1.50 and ends at approximately 1.52.
- £/DM:** The y-axis ranges from 2.10 to 2.30. The line starts at approximately 2.20 and ends at approximately 2.27.
- £/¥:** The y-axis ranges from 160 to 180. The line starts at approximately 165 and ends at approximately 165.01.

New York exchange rates and Old Street City 1250 Index

Dollars				Dollars			
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	1.5250	-0.57c	1.5062	£ (London)	0.6557	+0.10	0.6265
£ (New York)	1.5245	-0.50c	1.5025	£ (New York)	0.6590	+0.13	0.6279
DM (London)	2.2750	+1.29c	2.2382	DM (London)	1.4918	+1.40c	1.4910
¥ (London)	165.01	+0.13	164.84	¥ (London)	108.230	+0.825	83.6350
Index	83.9	+0.3	84.5	\$ Index	98.4	+0.8	99.4

OTHER INDICATORS

Index				Index			
Index	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago
Oil Brent \$	20.78	+0.63	18.93	RPI	150.9	+2.70c	146.9
Gold \$	396.80	+1.75	390.40	GDP	107.0	+2.00c	106.1
Gold £	260.20	+2.59	244.58	Base Rate	6.00pc		6.75

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business

CINVen vies for Redland brick division

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

CINVen, the former venture capital subsidiary of British Coal, emerged yesterday as one of four potential buyers of Redland's UK brick manufacturing operations. Redland confirmed it was in talks with CINVen, which recently backed a £63.5m management buyout of the brick-making activities of Christian Salvesen, but said it was too early to say who would end up with the brick business.

CINVen's interest in Chel-

wood, the Christian Salvesen brick unit, would make it an obvious contender to pick up Redland's business. With a book value of about £130m, the Redland operation would give a combined operation some critical mass in a still highly competitive market.

A CINVen spokesman admitted yesterday the group was one of a small group of potential bidders, but it poured cold water on press reports yesterday that the business might be worth £250m. It is understood that Redland is looking for

about net asset value. Together with a US brick business, which is also up for sale, and Terec, a European brick company which was sold in February for £71m, Redland's combined brick operations had net assets at the end of 1995 of £245.9m.

Operating profits of £21.6m were struck last year from sales of £179.2m.

Redland has about 18 per cent of the UK brick market, behind Istock, with 19 per cent, and Hanson, which controls 29 per cent, according to government figures for last year.

Putting Chelwood together with Redland's business would give CINVen about 23 per cent of the UK bricks market.

Redland confirmed last month that it was also talking to Wienerberger of Austria about a possible sale, but it has so far kept the other two potential buyers close to its chest. Speculation has focused on CRH, the Irish building materials group, and Australia's Boral and Pioneer.

CINVen has been a big player in buyouts over the years, and was recently involved in the ac-

quisition of Dunlop Slazenger from BTR. Other features in its cap include Automotive Products, acquired for £181m, and the £108m Wightlink deal.

Redland announced last month it was seeking buyers for its brick businesses as part of a radical restructuring of its European operations which are expected to involve the transfer of all the company's western European tile interests into Braas, its successful 50.8 per cent-owned German subsidiary, in exchange for cash and shares.

see Redland's shareholding in Braas rise to about 60 per cent and is expected to simplify investment plans and reduce duplication. Although Braas has given Redland exposure to the recent post-unification surge in Germany, recession is taking its toll and the company believes it is the right time to clarify the relationship between the two.

In the year to December, Redland announced a 5 per cent fall in underlying profits to £368m and became the only FTSE 100 company to announce a dividend cut.

Eurotunnel bags 140,000 passengers at Easter



On target: Alistair Morton of Eurotunnel which claims a victory in war against ferries

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Eurotunnel carried approaching 140,000 passengers on the car shuttle over the long Easter weekend, close to its own forecasts, as the price war with the ferries continued.

The company claimed its systems "ran pretty effortlessly" with four trains an hour most of the time during the four day weekend, and that that 7,700 vehicles were carried on Thursday, just below the record of 8,400 the previous Saturday.

Eurotunnel said its cut price duty free sales were proving a big attraction, taking passengers away from the ferries, and producing a 20 per cent increase in traffic in recent months as a direct result.

Last week Eurotunnel reported that the number of passengers carried rose 31 per cent in March.

Siena recently offered a third off some brands in its duty-free shops. However, the ferries dis-

pute Eurotunnel claims that a drop in ferry day trip traffic over the winter is due to Eurotunnel's cheap fares and hooze.

A price war on duty-free hits at the ferry operators' most sensitive spot since much of their profit comes from these sales.

The marketing effort for Le Shuttle is also being stepped up with the award of part of the company's advertising business for the Le Shuttle train services to the London advertising agency BST-BDDP, in an effort to boost bookings with new advertising.

The new agency is expected to relaunch Le Shuttle after technical setbacks and delays last year hit ticket sales.

The company's promotion drive was regarded as lacklustre until it started the duty-free price war.

There have been much stronger criticisms, however, of the marketing campaign by the operators of the Eurostar passenger train service, which does not belong to Eurotunnel

but which produces a significant part of its revenue. The stepped-up advertising campaign was started by Le Shuttle's new chief commercial officer, Bill Dix.

Polls had shown poor public awareness of both Eurostar passenger trains and Le Shuttle's passenger and car services - though there was intensive TV advertising last year.

Around half of Eurotunnel's £10m marketing budget for 1996 will be handled by BST, while another agency, Wunderman Cato Johnson (WCI), will continue to run the coach and freight accounts, which includes British press, direct marketing and radio campaigns, Eurotunnel said.

Le Shuttle's overall European marketing expenditure for this year is expected to total £20m.

This includes campaigns in France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, promoting the Eurostar services to France and Belgium.

Rentokil profit attacked in new shouting match

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The shouting match between the two sides to the £1.9bn bid battle for BET continued yesterday as pressure grew for a higher offer from Rentokil.

The new hostilities came as Fidelity International, once one of BET's biggest shareholders, revealed that it had reduced its stake to 1.09 per cent. The fund management group, which owned 7 per cent of BET a year ago, has been steadily reducing its stake. With the latest sale, it has cut its stake from just under 5 per cent to just over 1 per cent in the space of six weeks.

In a shot aimed at debunking Rentokil's past record, BET claimed profits growth at the pest control to potted plants group was well below the much vaunted aim of 20 per cent a year. Stripping out foreign exchange benefits, profits on the sale of fixed assets and the use of previously established ac-

quisition provisions, pre-tax profits rose by just 16.9 per cent last year, BET said.

Rentokil's latest report and accounts, from which the figures were culled, also "catalogues disappointing results across a wide spread of Rentokil's businesses", BET claimed.

John Clark, chief executive, said: "The slowdown shown by Rentokil's report and accounts vindicates our view that Rentokil needs BET. As we have always said, this ill-conceived offer seems to be a desperate attempt by Rentokil to use BET's superior growth to maintain its own targets at BET shareholders' expense."

But Rentokil hit back last night. Clive Thompson, chief executive, said: "We think this is the last knockings of a tired and flagging management team. Our view is that the time for a company doctor [at BET] is over... It is time now to pass the company over to a management

specialising in the industrial services business."

Mr Thompson said the adverse comments in the annual report on 16 of its individual operations, highlighted by BET, was part of its practice of reporting fairly on the performance of the group's businesses.

Given that there were over 200 such businesses in the group, they were "barely much reflection of the total", he said.

Meanwhile, referring to the £7.5m of one-off items picked out by BET as inflating last year's profits, Mr Thompson said the other side had failed to refer to similar items in 1994, when exchange rates had been adverse and fixed asset disposal profits had been lower. These were actually "continuing items which occur every year", but stripping them out of both sets of figures he admitted the underlying growth rate was still just under 19 per cent.

Pendragon to be sole Alfa Romeo dealer within M25

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Pendragon, the motor dealer spun off from Williams Holdings in 1989, has been granted the right to sell Fiat and Alfa Romeo cars across the Greater London region in a deal which observers believe marks a significant shift in the way cars are currently sold in Britain.

The award of a large region to one dealer - Pendragon has exclusive rights to sell the makes within the M25 - is a significant change from the current system which limits the number of franchise outlets any one dealer can operate within a given area.

Potentially it offers successful groups big economies of scale and marks an important step towards the consolidation of the car retail industry.

According to Trevor Finn, chief executive of the Derby-

based group, the market area approach is based on a successful trial in the US, where General Motors launched a new car, Saturn, and distributed it through big geographical territories. The idea is that dealers set up a core network of outlets, building up as the number of the make's cars increases.

The new system also allows a better allocation of resources within an area. If, for example, a region includes a high number of used cars of a certain make, but little demand for new cars, a service centre can be built without the extra unnecessary cost of a new car showroom.

Within London, Pendragon plans to build 15 Fiat locations, of which three will be service only outlets. Alfa Romeo will be represented at nine of the sites.

Mr Finn said yesterday the introduction of new models from Fiat and Alfa Romeo had

enabled the brands to outperform the UK market significantly. Sales of Fiat cars increased in the UK by over 20 per cent last year, and have risen by 21 per cent so far this year, increasing market share to about 4 per cent.

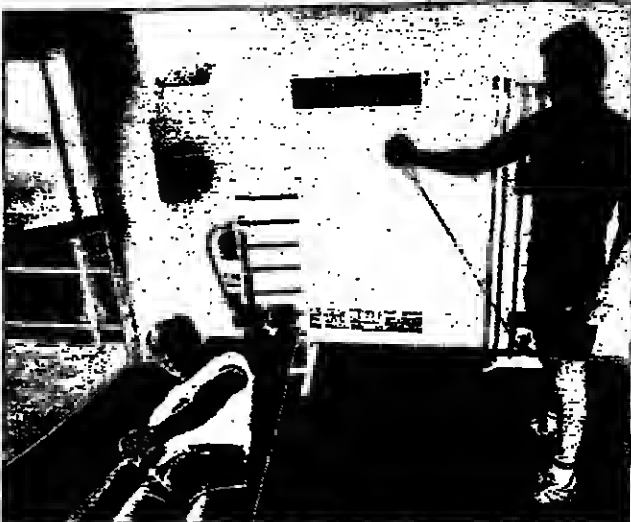
The Fiat agreement is the second time Pendragon has been awarded the right to sell a make over a large area. Last year it was signed up by Volvo to develop the South London territory which includes all areas within the M25 south of the river Thames. Four dealerships are now open for business in that chain and another will open in June after refurbishment.

Pendragon's concentration on the luxury end of the car market paid off last year when pre-tax profits rose 17 per cent to £11.5m, despite a difficult market for car sales.

Gyms and tonic as City banks muscle in

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



Workout: More emphasis is being placed on fitness

Gym-building mania has swept the City in the last few years, particularly in the American investment banks such as Morgan Stanley and Merrill Lynch. The latter proudly boasts in the latest edition of the *Securities & Investment Review* that attendance at its in-house gym is up 57 per cent since 1993.

As employee fitness is now deemed so important, how are the Brits faring? According to the *Review*, Schroders has been holding aerobics classes for one 500-strong office where the average attendance has been between six and 12. Schroders is also one of the most successful investment banks in London. Is there a link?

"Complaints are generally seen in a negative way, but acted on positively, they help improve service and turn a potentially unhappy client into a satisfied customer and even increase business," so claims Chris Lane, chairman of Time Manager International, which makes personal organisers. Mr Lane is addressing the next Continuing Business Education meeting at Aston Business School, Birmingham.

The announcement from the meeting's sponsors, Grant Thornton, was titled "A Complaint is a Gift" and was dated 1 April. A spokesman insisted yesterday the timing was coincidental.

Rude funeral directors, ashes lost in the post and speeding hearses are just some examples of the bad service bereaved families have suffered, according to the first report from the

UK's Funeral Ombudsman. The report describes a hearse that shot through a town at 40 mph while ignoring all traffic lights.

One relative was sent to the wrong funeral for someone with the same surname. Other complaints concerned undersized coffins, paupers' graves and brusque funeral directors rushing through ceremonies. "It's a completely unregulated business - anyone can set up a funeral business in their garage," Regina West, administrator of the voluntary Funeral Ombudsman Scheme, told Reuters. Since starting up in June 1994 Ombudsman Geoffrey Woodroffe had received 96 complaints from the 600,000 or so burials that have taken place, a number he reckons will increase once public awareness of his job grows.

He offered compensation to only five complainants, largely because half were against companies outside the scheme.

The Government was due to publish the latest report from its Six Wise People yesterday morning at 11.30. The journalistic herd arrived on the Treasury's doorstep on time, but was kept waiting until noon, without explanation. Were they late doing the 's' and crossing the 't's' after the Easter break? A Treasury spokesman said yesterday evening: "There was a short delay in getting the document to the relevant door." He added that the wire services had the report from eleven o'clock in a "lock-up." No doubt suitable beverages were provided.

Dewhirst profits from Marks & Spencer

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Investors cautious about years of dismal returns from the textile sector should take more than a second look at Dewhirst Group. In stark contrast to its peers, Dewhirst has used the recession to squeeze ever higher margins and profits out of the famously cut-throat business of supplying Marks & Spencer. The result has been a share price that has outperformed the rest of the textiles and apparel sector by nearly 680 per cent in the past five years, even after yesterday's 3p downward tick to 186p.

That reaction in the shares was a little perverse in view of another cracking performance from the group in the year to 12 January. Pre-tax profits up 31 per cent to £22.3m were in line with market expectations and came after a year in which rivals have blamed strong raw materials prices and the hot summer for less than sparkling results.

It is hard to pin down a single factor for this performance other than simple good management, which is something of a surprise in a company still dominated by the founding family. Including the honorary president, there are still four Dewhirsts on the board and the family controls a quarter of the equity.

But sentimental considerations did not prevent Dewhirst reorganising its UK manufacturing base early on in the recession, a move which has stood it in good stead. While others, notably leading M&S supplier Coats Vye, are only belatedly attempting to source more clothing offshore, Dewhirst's overseas manufacturing operations have allowed it to undercut the competition and win market share.

With over 13 per cent of the market supplying M&S, it is reckoned to have narrowed the gap with second-placed Courtauld Textiles to around one percentage point in 1995. Continued sales growth at last year's rates - 12 per cent in ladieswear and 15 per cent in menswear - should have Dewhirst snapping at Coats 20 per cent-odd share before long.

The group's expansion overseas is being stepped up this year. After two years holding capital expenditure at just over £8m, the budget for 1996 has jumped to between £14m and £15m,

with most of the money earmarked for new plants in Morocco and Indonesia to replace existing third-party sources. Dewhirst sees nearly all its future sales growth being met by overseas supplies, which could mean 50 per cent of the business being sourced from outside the UK by the year 2000.

Given the continuing fight for sales on the high street, this greater control over a lower-cost manufacturing base may not help margins in the short run. But, after more than doubling from around 3 per cent five years ago, the margin story is not over yet at Dewhirst. Last year saw operating margins rise another 1 percentage point to 7.8 per cent. With raw materials prices stabilising, after rising between 5 and 7 per cent last year, the owners are good.

Profits of £25.5m this year would put the shares on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14. Still reasonable value, assuming M&S maintains its grip on the high street.

Hang on to Recs left in the cold

If there is a bid looming for Yorkshire Electricity, nobody has told SBC Warburg. The investment bank is thought to have reduced its stake recently to under 0.3 per cent.

As with the other three Recs still left on the shelf without an approach - East Midlands, Northern and London -

speculation has driven the share price sharply upwards in the past few weeks. More informed observers in the City, including SBC Warburg, have had a tough job explaining why.

The most popular suggestion is that a bid for one or more of the four awaits only the verdict of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the PowerGen bid for Midlands Electricity and the National Power bid for Southern. The likely bidders, according to this story, simply want to see the small print of the report before they make a move.

The two bids were referred late last year and Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, is due to announce his decision in the next few weeks.

The only other big generator known to want a Rec, British Energy, cannot do anything at the moment because it is not to be privatised until June. It is questionable whether it could afford a Rec, even with the lower-than-expected debt level with which it is to be sold.

The result of the inquiry and Mr Lang's decision is likely to be irrelevant to any of the overseas bidders rumoured to be still snooping around the Recs, because vertical integration is not an issue with them. Other foreign bids were cleared with alacrity last year.

As for a counter-bid for Midlands or Southern, the only sensible time to do that was soon after the references were made. The bid timetable would have allowed shareholders to reach decision point well before Mr Lang's pronouncement on the PowerGen and National Power offers, an unbeatable tactical advantage.

But as with many of these movements, the share price may be telling the right story for the wrong reason. The four remaining Recs are only marginally less attractive than those that have been sold.

Northern is often said to have spoiled the chances of a bid by giving away so much cash to shareholders, and raising its gearing. But the share price adjusts for that, so the mix of debt and

Dewhirst Group: at a glance

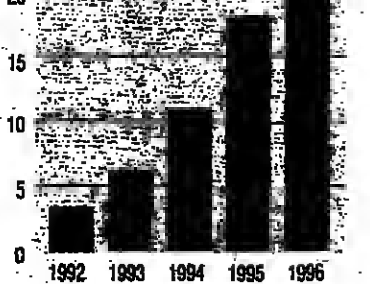
Market value: £242m, share price 186p

5-year record	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Revenue (£m)	130	132	214	228	233
Pre-tax profits (£m)	4.13	6.46	9.59	17.0	22.3
Profit after tax (£m)	2.77	3.52	5.59	10.5	14.5
Dividends per share (pence)	0.71	1.0	1.45	2.65	3.6

Net cash

£m

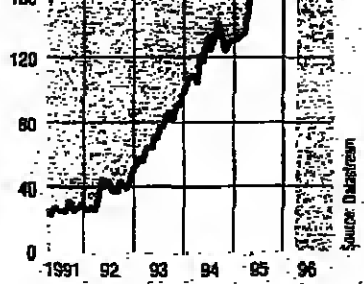
1992 1993 1994 1995 1996



Share price

pence

1991 92 93 94 95 96

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HOW TO QUALIFY

Lufthan

London keeps its head as Wall Street sneezes

COMMENT

The corrections on the other side of the Atlantic were always likely to be more pronounced anyway because the bull run in equities has been much stronger over there than here.

Wall Street sneezed and London shrugged. The extent to which British financial markets have succeeded in decoupling from those in the US was amply demonstrated again yesterday as the FT-SE 100 responded to Monday's sharp fall in the Dow with a 3 point rise while bonds hardly budged at all.

There are compelling reasons why Britain and the rest of Europe should not slavishly follow Wall Street. The corrections on the other side of the Atlantic were always likely to be more pronounced anyway because the bull run in equities has been much stronger over there than here.

But more significantly, the US and Europe are clearly at quite different stages in the cycle. The evidence of economic improvement, and not just on the jobs front, is much more apparent in the US, making the next move in interest rates there more likely to be upwards to counter an inflationary threat.

The Treasury's Six Wise People - with the usual exception of Patrick Minford - may think that the UK is also heading for a tightening in monetary policy.

But yesterday the market preferred to concentrate on the less than compelling case for higher interest rates contained in the latest output figures which point to sluggish growth and the need for a cut if anything in the cost of borrowing.

Moreover, there are electoral cycles as well as economic ones. It is looking increasingly unlikely that the Government will be

able to hit its growth forecast of 3% this year while keeping inflation within the 2.5% target range.

The Treasury Panel says as much but faced with a choice between the two it points to the need to raise rates to choke off an incipient rise in inflation.

It may be that the Chancellor Kenneth Clarke puts more store by his inflation target than his growth forecast. But whether a Prime Minister with one eye on a vanishing Parliamentary majority and the other on electoral survival agrees is another matter.

A further rate cut to accelerate growth at the expense of a gentle nudge upwards in inflation may be a temptation that is too hard to resist. The outcome of the Tamworth by-election this Thursday may tell us whether the Government is in the mood to succumb.

Labour sees light on media ownership

There are welcome signs from the Labour front bench that competition policy rather than cumbersome thresholds and ceilings might guide an eventual Labour Government in the development of rules on media ownership.

The Government's current efforts to liberalise the media sector, which have fuelled a sharp share price rise among the affected companies, are far too complicated, and merely repeat many of the obvious mistakes

from the past. Restrictions under the last bill, in 1992, gave rise to a range of legal wheezes aimed at getting around the rules. The same will happen again this time.

Far better would be to use tough competition policy to weed out near-monopolies and curb market abuses, leaving companies to get on with the business of building truly competitive media conglomerates.

The effect of the current proposals on media cross-ownership is perverse. Two large newspaper groups are singled out for special treatment under the proposed rules - Rupert Murdoch's News International and the Mirror Group, owner 43 per cent of the Independent. Neither will be able to own more than 20 per cent of an ITV company.

But News International is unlikely to want any more TV - certainly not of the traditional, terrestrial kind. Through BSkyB, it has already spent billions building a near-monopoly in pay-TV in the UK, where the growth rates far outstrip those in the commercial "free" TV business. Lacking the scale of a News International - which is part of Mr Murdoch's \$10 billion parent company - Mirror Group cannot afford to build an equivalent pay-TV presence from scratch.

Far easier would be to invest in an ITV company, providing it with a balance to its newspaper interests. But it will be constrained from doing so under the Broadcasting Bill.

Much bigger companies, including Associated and United-MAL, escape the cross-ownership limits, because their newspapers

don't sell as many copies. This is far too crude a measure, however. Who is to say that the Daily Mail is not more influential than the Daily Mirror? Labour is suggesting a far more robust set of rules governing commercial activities - surely a better approach. In the first instance, Labour intends to propose an amendment to the Broadcasting Bill in the Commons, just as it did in the Lords, to raise the ceiling from 20 to 25 per cent, thereby freeing Mirror Group.

This is unlikely to be accepted by the Government. But if Labour gets in expect a real change in the way media is regulated. Market concentration, and not artificial limits and thresholds, will be the acid test.

Ominously near a coup over pensions

Martin Broughton, the chief executive of MBAT, along with other leading CBI figures including Sir Richard Greenbury, is close to pulling off an unwelcome coup over directors' pensions disclosure. They appear to be isolating the National Association of Pension Funds in the argument over how disclosure should be implemented.

To recap on this arcane but important little debate, Sir Richard's report on top pay last year recommended disclosure of the annual increase in value of directors' pensions, rather than the cash cost to the company in pension contributions.

Actuaries assumed that meant disclosing the capital value, which in the case of a large pay rise such as the 75 per cent awarded to Cedric Brown at British Gas would mean admitting in the company's annual report to a multi-million pound benefit. Of the original participants in the Greenbury report, only the NAF appears to be firmly committed to the principle of disclosing capital values.

The idea rang alarm bells not just in boardrooms and corporate public relations departments but also in government, which would face a rerun of fat cat headlines as the election approaches.

This would be a gift to Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, who made so much political capital last year out of directors' pay. Not surprisingly, he backs disclosure of capital values.

The CBI's alternative is to disclose not the capital value but the increase in the annual retirement pension earned by a director during each financial year, a number that will rarely run above six figures. With the Stock Exchange likely to fall into line and the actuaries themselves not as united as they first appeared, the game is nearly over.

But shareholders, for whom the accounts are written in the first place, should not give up because this is an important issue of principle. Capital values are the by far and away the most meaningful disclosure when it comes to large future pension liabilities, and anything else is a fudge.

FD steps down at Harrisons

JOHN WILLCOCK

A "personal disagreement" between finance director Martin Anderson of Harrisons & Crossfield and the rest of the board resulted in him resigning yesterday "by mutual agreement".

"We agreed jointly that we should part company," Harrisons' chief executive, Bill Turcan, said. A company source insisted there was no suggestion whatsoever of any impropriety, but that there had been personal disagreements in what was a "small, closely-knit management team".

Mr Anderson's total emoluments last year were £191,000. Since he is on a two-year contract he might receive a pay-off of nearly £400,000. But details will only be revealed in the 1997 accounts due next year.

Mr Turcan was Harrisons' finance director before Mr Anderson and played a key role in his recruitment.

Mr Anderson joined two years ago from a merchant banking background and was heavily involved in the company's switch to acquisitions - it is expected to spend between £200m-£300m over the next few years.

Company sources said the acquisition plans, which will focus the conglomerate on chemicals and timber, would go ahead despite the resignation. Harrisons's shares fell 9p to 148p yesterday. Analysts said that this was also the day when the company went ex-dividend. The grossed-up dividend was worth 6.75p.

Consumer body savages watchdogs

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The Consumers Association has called for a radical overhaul of "confused" utility regulation, including changes in legislation to give customers more rights. The association's hardest-hitting attack to date on regulation emerges in a submission to the Hansard Society and is a forerunner to the association's own review of the former nationalised utilities, due for publication later this year.

The report by the association argues that consumer protection should be the principal goal of regulation but that under the present statutory framework "this is clearly not the case".

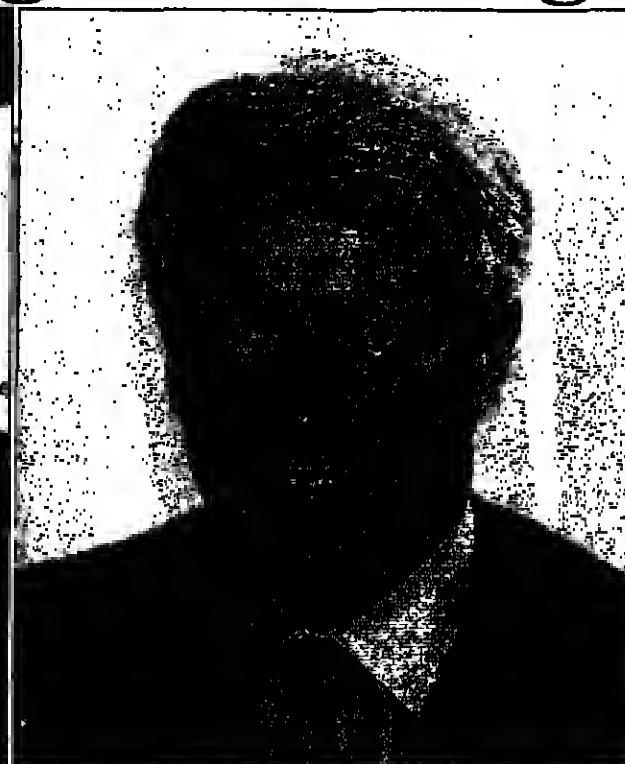
It criticises the extent to which it is left to the discretion of individual watchdogs to weigh the importance of consumers against promotion of competition and the ability of companies to finance core functions. The association demands changes to limit the freedom of regulators to depart from the objective of protecting consumer interests.

According to the report: "The present legislative framework is characterised by a confusion between ends and means. While the development of greater competition within the utility industries is clearly very important, it should not be viewed as a goal in itself but as a mechanism for ensuring that firms face incentives to improve their efficiency and, through inter-firm rivalry, to pass such cost savings on to their customers."

The association also attacks the regulators for lack of openness in their decision-making. It singles out Ofwat, the water



Jeers and cheers: Ian Byatt (left) of Ofwat was criticised while Don Cruickshank of Oftel won some praise



industry regulator, for "not seeming to accept the legitimate need for independent scrutiny of its decisions on behalf of consumers".

At the same time the association notes that Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications watchdog, shows the strongest commitment to seeking out the views of the public.

The association sharply criticises non-disclosure of information about utility companies on the grounds of commercial confidentiality. "We are extremely concerned that excessive use of confidentiality claims is allowing operators to conceal

practices that are against the interests of consumer and the public in general."

A spokeswoman for Ian Byatt, director general of Ofwat, rebutted the association's views, saying that Ofwat made "huge amounts" of information available and encouraged public debate. She added that it was only "right and proper" that commercial confidentiality be observed where it had been requested by the company.

The association launches its broadside against a background of public dissatisfaction over boardroom greed in the privatised companies and a view

that the consumer is losing out while shareholders are gaining handsomely. There has also been growing criticism that regulation is based too much on individual personalities.

The Labour Party, while appearing unclear as to what it would do about the watchdogs, has made it plain the present framework would be unlikely to continue if it comes to power.

The association wants as a minimum in any future regime, that price regulation should be overhauled to force companies to reduce charges most in the provision of services where people have least choice.

This would mean a separate price cap for residential customers and a means of ensuring that, through any cap, households pay only for those services they use and not to bolster investments that primarily help businesses.

The association alleges that BT's average residential customers have seen prices fall by 1 per cent between 1990/91 and 1994/95 while business enjoyed a 20 per cent reduction. It warns: "Unless targeted price control is put in place, the experience of residential telecom users is likely to be repeated in gas and electricity."

IN BRIEF

• Apple Computer is thought to be on the verge of signing a pact to allow IBM to license Apple Macintosh operating system. Industry sources said that the deal would be similar to an agreement which Apple signed in February with Motorola. IBM was expected to have the rights to sub-license the Mac system to other computer makers seeking to develop Macintosh clones based on the PowerPC chip. An IBM spokesman declined to comment, but one source familiar with the talks said that the deal would provide "one-stop shopping" for companies seeking to clone the Apple Macintosh.

• The dollar set a 25-month high against the yen, reaching ¥108.35 in European trading. It also touched its highest level against the German mark, at DM1.4936, for two months. The move was driven by growing expectations that US interest rates will rise following Friday's report of a higher than expected jump of 140,000 in employment last month. The dollar's rise dragged sterling along on its coat-tails. The pound closed more than one and a half pence higher at DM2.761, and rose 0.3 on its index against a range of currencies to 83.9.

• Japan's economy is still on course for a gradual recovery, the Economic Planning Agency said yesterday. But it warned that growth remains fragile, with consumer spending picking up only very slowly. The government's ¥14 trillion spending programme, announced last September, has been the main factor behind the recovery so far, the EPA said.

• London's service sector saw business grow more quickly in the first quarter of 1996 than in any quarter since the start of the recession, according to a survey of some 250 London-based companies carried out by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The survey showed a record number of companies reporting increased domestic business.

There was also a big jump in business confidence with 68 per cent of companies expecting profitability to increase over the next 12 months.

• PhoneLink said its Tel-Me electronic information and commerce service had attracted more than 1,000 new business sites during March. New business sites in the first quarter of 1996 totalled 2,200 compared with 1,350 in the last quarter of 1995, an increase of over 60 per cent.

• Manufacturing orders in western Germany fell sharply in February, strengthening the case for a reduction in key official interest rates. Pan-German orders fell 1.4 per cent, driven by a 2.5 per cent drop in domestic orders. Foreign orders rose slightly. Unemployment figures due today are expected to confirm the economy's feeble state.

• Devro International is selling Devro America, its North American collagen sausage casings business, to Nitta Gelatin of Japan for a total of \$26m. The US Federal Trade Commission ruled that Devro had to sell the unit to maintain competition after its \$133.5m acquisition of Teepak.

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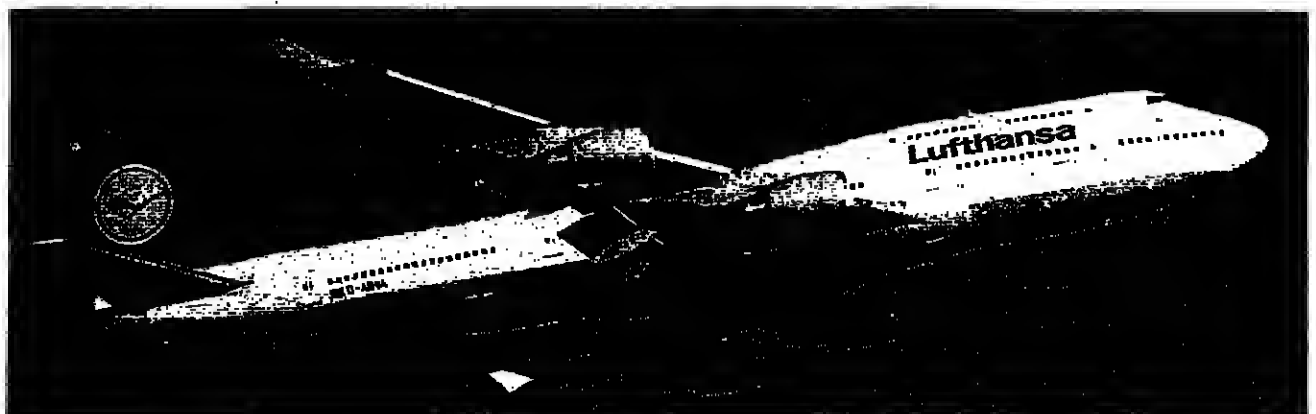
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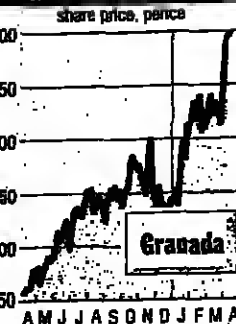
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92.27 -0.25

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Shares contemptuously ignored Monday's New York blues, managing to end a lacklustre session with a smattering of gains.

Gathering fears that the next US interest rate move will be up rather than down, a prospect which prompted the Dow Jones Average to slump 88.51 points, would, it was predicted, send the stock market tumbling.

True, the FT-SE 100 index suffered an early, knee-jerk reverse but sentiment gradually improved allowing it to close 3 points higher at 3,758.6.

The stock market's resilience stemmed in part from the feeling that domestic rates are, in the near term, more likely to be influenced by German considerations than American. And Germany's economic gloom could encourage the Bundesbank to lower interest charges when it meets next week.

Another round of speculative activity also helped the market to banish the US gloom. As befits a dull day when trading is slow some of the old takeover stories were dusted down and given yet another whirl.

Schroders was firm as stories swirled that Commerzbank of Germany was about to buy the merchant bank with, for good measure, stockbroker Cazenove. It was enough to lift Schroders' voting shares 30p to 1,230p - against a peak of 1,478p last year - and the non-voting units 27p to 990p.

British Gas was again united with British Petroleum by the rumour mill. Gas managed a small flare, up 4.5p to 239p, as BP rose 2.5p to 579.5p.

Yorkshire Electricity added 12p to 869p as talk of a US swoop continued to circulate. Pearson, in a firm media sector, gained a further 7p to 228p



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

on break-up hopes but Thorn EMI continued to drift from last week's peak, retreating 12p to 1,778p. Reed International improved 20p to 1,184p.

Tales of possible share buy-backs and special dividends were another source of excitement. Reuters, thought to be preparing a buy-back, firmed 9.5p to 766.5p; Great Universal Stores 12p to 696p and Associated British Foods 4p to 407p.

Amersham International, the health-care group, responded to reports that Richard Laphorne, finance director at British Aerospace, was to become non-executive chairman with a 26p advance

to 965p. But the departure of finance director Martin Anderson from Harrisons & Crossfield clipped the shares 9p to 148p.

Disposal hopes lifted WH Smith and Signet. Under new chief executive Bill Cockburn Smith is expected to withdraw from a number of peripheral activities including its Our Price music chain and its 50 per cent interest in the Do-it-All, do-it-yourself chain.

And Signet, the old Ramers, has been edging towards the sale of its main jewellery chains for some months and is thought to be on the verge of completing at least one disposal. Smith gained 13p to

477p, a 12-month high, and Signet rose 2p to 31p, best level for more than two years.

Granada, meeting analysts today, drifted 3p to 794p. It will be subjected to close questioning about the integration of Forte and its claim of a £100m profit enhancement. The proposed sales of unwanted Forte hotels and other assets will also come under scrutiny. Granada is due to report interim results in June.

The market's preoccupation with football was illustrated by a 23p jump to a 515p peak by Manchester United following the Easter results. But the growing threat of relegation to the second division clipped 0.25p from Millwall to 2.5p. Its hopes of blossoming into a media group are likely to be damaged if the club cannot cling to its first division status.

Analynical comments spurred chosen stocks. Kleinwort Benson added 3.5p to

166p at MFI Furniture and some of the banks were ticked a few coppers higher by broker recommendations.

Louho edged ahead 3.5p to 214p on talk Anglo-American, South Africa's biggest mining group, was near lifting its 5.9 per cent interest by buying shares from Dieter Bock, the German who runs the sprawling trading group. Avocet Mining, floated last week at 240p, fell 16p to 227p, week at 240p, fell 16p to 227p.

Diploma, the electrical distributor, held at 413p as NatWest Securities cut its profit forecasts from £28.8m to £25.4m and £31.4m to £26.8m.

Alvis, the defence group, added 6p to 163p following an agency cross of 30,000 shares at 161.5p but virtual reality group Superscape VR took another tumble after last week's profit warning, falling 38p to 560p. Pan Aetean, awaiting a Bolivian drilling report, recovered 9p to 75p.

TAKING STOCK

Shares of Waverley Mining, which switched from an investment vehicle to a mining company last year, remain short of friends at 91p. They have fallen from a 132p peak in the past year. William de Broe, the stockbroker, estimates assets ranging from coal mines in Scotland to gold mines in Australia - are 145p a share and the group is undervalued.

Chartfield Fund Management made its debut on the fringe Oxf share market, shipping 5p to 85p. Formerly traded on the old 4.2 market Chartfield, run by Mark Flawn Thomas, takes in four unit trusts including the Waverley Penny Share Fund which has led the smaller company trust section for three years. The trust was at one time run by Waverley Mining.

Alcoholic Beverages

Share	Price	Change
Adnoca	1.00	+0.05
Adnoca	1.00	+0.05
Adnoca	1.00	+0.05
Adnoca	1.00	+0.05
Adnoca	1.00	+0.05

Banks, Merchant

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Banks, Retail

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Diversified Industrials

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Electricity

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Building/Construction

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Electronics

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Building Materials

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Chemicals

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Distributors

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Engineering

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Gas Distribution

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Health Care

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Household Goods

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Insurance

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Engineering Vehicles

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Extractive Industries

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Food Manufacturers

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Investment Companies

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Investment Trusts

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Leisure & Hotels

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Life Assurance

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Media

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Pharmaceuticals

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Printing & Paper

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Property

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Retailers, Food

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Retailers, General

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Support Services

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Telecommunications

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Textiles & Apparel

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Transport

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Utilities

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Water

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Rights Issues

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Recent Issues

Share	Price	Change
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05
Barclays	1.00	+0.05

Freelancers play key role in shaping brave new world

ECONOMIC VIEW
YVETTE COOPER

Now the Inland Revenue is jumping on the out-forcing bandwagon. Like companies, entire industries, local authorities and government departments before it, the Revenue has started contracting out its work to the self-employed — only this time the self-employed won't be paid for the extra work they do.

Under self-assessment, which begins this month, millions of people will have to calculate their own tax returns, rather than expecting civil servants to do it for them.

Not that the Inland Revenue has ever worked out the tax bills for most people in the economy — employees all have their dues calculated by employers under the Pay As You Earn system.

But the fact that the Inland Revenue is now expecting the self-employed to do the same is a sign that they too have recognised the big changes taking place in the labour market as more and more people stop being "employed" and start working for themselves instead.

Self-employment grew by a remarkable 1.2 million in the 1980s. Even despite the recession, the numbers of self-employed today are still considerably higher than 16 years ago. Around one in eight of the working population are now their own bosses.

The Government would like to believe this is evidence of a more entrepreneurial culture in Britain these days, as the self-employed build their businesses and create jobs for others.

Management gurus such as Charles Handy suggest instead that we are watching the development of the companies and work patterns of the future, as highly skilled white col-

lar workers and professionals become freelancers and sell their services to their former employers.

The truth about the current growth in self-employment may be less glamorous than either would like to believe. Certainly there has been an increase in the numbers of professional and freelance self-employed who show little sign of ever creating work for anyone else. Around two-thirds of the self-employed have no employees at all. Meanwhile 6 per cent of professionals are now working from home.

The publishing and media indus-

try have cut their staff accordingly. Professional skills from legal advice to economics to information technology are all increasingly in demand to freelance work.

The benefits to businesses who introduce these working practices are relatively obvious. Staff members cost the company in additional National Insurance contributions.

Overheads — in terms of desks, office space and equipment — all add to the bill. But the biggest benefit to the company comes through transferring the risk that staff work might dry up.

When everyone is on staff, they still have to be paid in a lean period. In the world of contracting out, it is the freelancers who have to go out scavenging for different contracts to keep their bills paid.

So here is the new world emerging — in certain industries at least. Professional skills are bought in rather than employed. Highly skilled people are paid for their knowledge and their services rather than for the hours they put in — an arrangement that is potentially extremely liberating for many professionals.

Mr Handy paints a portrait of portfolio workers, constructing combinations of contracts to suit themselves. But it is not yet clear whether these new work patterns will turn into the long-term trends that Mr Handy describes.

Many of these professional free-

lancers do not yet have a portfolio existence. And even if individuals manage to adjust and are happy with these new arrangements there are longer-term problems in the industries that have most wholeheartedly embraced freelancing so far.

In an article in the spring issue of *New Economy*, Celia Stanworth describes a detailed case study of freelancers in the publishing industry. Interviewing 371 freelance editors, proof readers and indexers, she finds that while many were women, who had turned freelance on starting a family, most had become self-employed following redundancies from publishing houses.

And they were typically dependent on one main client, often their former employer. In effect, many of them were doing the same job for the same company as before. Only now, their tax status, their security, and their place of work had changed.

If these new freelancers had retained the same bargaining power in the labour market, they should have

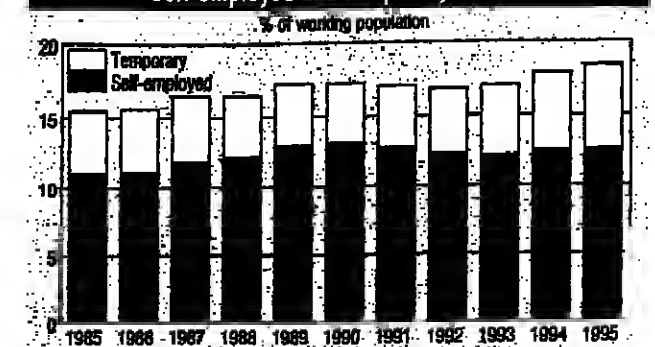
been paid more for taking on the new risks themselves. Not so, Ms Stanworth finds. Their hourly rate remained roughly the same as their in-house colleagues. Out-sourcing to freelancers was simply a way for publishing houses to push real wages down, when faced with an over-supply of qualified publishing professionals.

Imagine for a moment however that those freelance skills were suddenly hard to come by. A desperate editor with a deadline looming is forced to spend hours on the phone trying to find people with the free time and experience to do the work. The best, most professional workers are never available when you need them most.

And should, heaven forbid, a crisis occur where a piece of work has to be revised at the last minute, there are no available staff willing to work all weekend to turn things around.

Suddenly out-sourcing looks a lot less attractive. Sensible companies will want to tie their best pro-

Self-employed and temporary workers



professionals in, to ensure they have a steady and reliable supply of high quality work. Contracts, retainers and even staff jobs all slip back onto the agenda.

Even in the publishing industry this sort of skills shortage may not be so far away. Ms Stanworth finds that three-quarters of the freelancers she interviewed were over 40, a third were over 50. Most spent many years building up experience and contacts, working full-time in the publishing industry.

In contrast, those without experience who tried to break into freelancing found it very hard to get work.

Clearly, the publishing industry is revealing in a time-limited labour market phenomenon: over-supply of experienced professionals. But no one is predicting the training and experience for the freelancers and portfolio workers of the future.

Across the media it may not matter too much if the next generation doesn't ever spend a decade or two acquiring experience with a single company.

The skills needed may advance so

fast, that portfolio professionals will just update their experience with regular courses and secondments instead. But the short-termism and the problems for training revealed in the publishing industry are a good guide to why other industries have rejected the model entirely.

Widespread out-sourcing is a far cry from the stakeholding companies advocated by economist John Kay. He describes successful companies as networks of loyal relationships between suppliers, employees, investors, managers and customers. The political enthusiasm for freelancing is even more limited.

Despite the obvious advantages for women who want to combine their work with family commitments, the growth of freelancing and temporary contracts are seen as the source of middle-class anxiety about job insecurity. But the long-term prospects for the new self-employed will depend not on the advice of politicians or economists, but on whether the training structures and the labour supply of the future make the use of freelancers a sustainable business proposition.



Key sector: Freelancing is growing in the media industry

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.5590	8.4	22.19
Canada	2.0898	11.3	50.37
Germany	2.2750	56.48	147.16
France	2.2918	10.18	37.34
Italy	2.2918	75.90	221.48
Japan	165.05	75.70	225.28
ECU	1.2298	5.7	19.23
Belgium	46.291	2.4	34.29
Denmark	8.7833	38.66	41.37
Netherlands	25.407	63.54	189.75
Ireland	0.9892	9.5	25.20
Norway	9.0505	18.44	64.89
Spain	165.05	30.48	107.34
Sweden	10.237	9.5	23.34
Switzerland	12.836	68.80	187.15
Australia	1.9390	20.31	67.85
Hong Kong	7.7493	10.61	224.70
New Zealand	2.2237	43.47	133.56
Saudi Arabia	5.7195	0.0	14.00
Singapore	2.1462	0.0	0.0

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	1.5590	8.4	22.19
Australia	1.9390	20.31	67.85
Brazil	12.7097	10.93	34.06
Canada	2.0898	11.3	50.37
Denmark	8.7833	38.66	41.37
France	2.2918	10.18	37.34
Germany	2.2750	56.48	147.16
India	56.225	24.30	34.00
Italy	2.2918	75.90	221.48
Japan	165.05	75.70	225.28
UK	1.5590	8.4	22.19
US	1.5590	8.4	22.19

Forward rates quoted low to high are at a discount; rates quoted high to low are at a premium.
*Dollar rates quoted at 100 dollars.
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 323 3033.
Cable cost 36p per minute (cheap rate) 48p other times.

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	5.00%
France	5.50%	Italy	5.00%
Japan	5.00%	Spain	5.00%
Belgium	5.00%	Netherlands	5.00%
Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	5.00%	Australia	5.00%
Canada	5.00%	USA	5.00%

Bond Yields

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	5.00%
France	5.50%	Italy	5.00%
Japan	5.00%	Spain	5.00%
Belgium	5.00%	Netherlands	5.00%
Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	5.00%	Australia	5.00%
Canada	5.00%	USA	5.00%

Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	5.00%
France	5.50%	Italy	5.00%
Japan	5.00%	Spain	5.00%
Belgium	5.00%	Netherlands	5.00%
Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	5.00%	Australia	5.00%
Canada	5.00%	USA	5.00%

Tourist Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	5.00%
France	5.50%	Italy	5.00%
Japan	5.00%	Spain	5.00%
Belgium	5.00%	Netherlands	5.00%
Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	5.00%	Australia	5.00%
Canada	5.00%	USA	5.00%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Life FT-SE Index Option

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Energy

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Commodity Indices

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Precious Metals

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Agricultural

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Other Softs

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Key

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Key

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Key

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long 01	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 02	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Key

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Long 03	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 04	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long 05	10.00	10.00	10.00

Key

Volume	LME Stocks		chg
38457	757025	+	8100
657	80800	+	500
64210	37425	.	1850
8838	88875	.	1775
8758	34210	.	96
3264	5210	+	60
11400	823650	.	3575



THE INDEPENDENT

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



Grand Prix Shopping List

POINTS SCORED

DRIVERS	POINTS	POINTS
1 M Schumacher	4	24
2 J Alesi	26	47
£20m		85
£18m		29
£13m		5
6 E Irvine	17	35
£13m		55
9 H H Frenzen	0	8
10 M Brundle	0	1
12 J Herbert	8	22
13 M Salo	0	33
£4m		8
16 U Katajama	-2	23
18 O Paris	4	10
19 L Badoer	-4	28
21 A Montemini	12	3
22 G Fisichella	0	0
24 T Marques	0	0
26 H Noda	0	-5
£1m		0
29 J-C Boullion	0	0
31 K Burt	0	0
33 N Fontana	0	0
35 N Larini	0	0
37 A Prost	0	0
39 K Wendlinger	0	0

The latest scores and results

There can be no doubt who is the most valuable driver to have leading a Dream Grand Prix Team: Damon Hill's grand total of 85 points is starting to make him look very good value even at £23m. His leading pursuers, Jacques Villeneuve and Jean Alesi, seem spell-bound behind him: they can get close, but they cannot get past.

Hill has so many assets: the reliability and speed of the Williams-Renault, his own experience and the back-up of Villeneuve to name but three. And he is using them with consummate skill, timing his fast runs in practice perfectly, and racing with a high cruising speed and just a little in hand should it be



Main picture: Damon Hill leads the field on the first lap in Argentina. Above: Being congratulated by his wife, Georgie, after his victory.

needed. And so far this year pit-stop strategy, a weakness for Williams last season, has been immaculate. Villeneuve enjoyed himself in Argentina. He is a real old-fashioned racer, and while he will have been annoyed to have dropped behind at the start of the race, his delight at having to dice with and overtake

other drivers to succeed was transparent. "I lost a lot of places, but it was fun to fight and overtake them," he said after the race. Further down the field it was good to see strong contributions from two £10m men, Rubens Barrichello and Johnny Herbert, but the real bargain of the race was £3m-rated Andrea Montemini. The talented



Italian did well to qualify the recalcitrant Forti-Ford, and then collected a bundle of Most-Improved points for keeping it circulating at the back of the field throughout. Team-mate Luca Badoer was not so fortunate, col-

lecting a minus score for parking his Forti upside-down in a gravel trap. And a word of sympathy for Pedro Diniz. He was a hot tip for Dream Team success last week, but ended up hot and bothered in Argentina when his Ligier caught fire

and Pedro had to bale out in a hurry. Luckily no more than a Band-Aid was needed to repair him and he will join all the other contenders on the grid at the Nurburgring on 28 April for the European Grand Prix.

WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training

school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

Top 50 Dream Teams

All teams are in equal 1st position with 161 points.

1 Bighill Racing	18 Visa F1	35 Boy Racers Blues
2 The Spoilers	19 The Tarmac Eaters	36 Mortal Kombat
3 Karvey Team Racing	20 Slipstream	37 The Pace Setters
4 BJ Werbangers Racing Team	21 Hill's Angels	38 DB Racing
5 Goody Gum Drops	22 Peter's Perfect First	39 Burton Yamaha
6 The Williton After Burners	23 Formula Feel Good	40 The Day Stormers
7 Herbert Grand Prix Team 1	24 Hipala Racing Team	41 Simon's Perfect Pitstop
8 Chapman's Charges 2	25 Blue Healers	42 Hot Dogs
9 Tyrrells Tyrants	26 Driving Force Racing	43 The Wiggly Waggies
10 Prolapse Racing	27 Riley's Radicals	44 Now or Never
11 Morgan's Team	28 Apricorn Fun House	45 Up The Hill Round The Bend
12 Come On Dad	29 No More Excuses Grand Prix	46 Kayson
13 PJW Racing	30 Mug Chanders	47 Martin
14 Allegro Racers	31 Dodds 2	48 Ring Road Rebels
15 Eagles	32 Brad's Blazers	49 Chris's Wacky Races
16 Nick's Nitros	33 PDA Racing	50 Animal Autos
17 Mark's Merry Men	34 Puerto Rico Team	

CHASSIS

40 Benetton	16	40
£18m		59
£15m		43
£14m		30
45 Jordan	14	9
46 Ligier	-1	21
47 Tyrrell	-3	22
48 Arrows	9	2
49 Minardi	0	-6
50 Forti	-4	-7

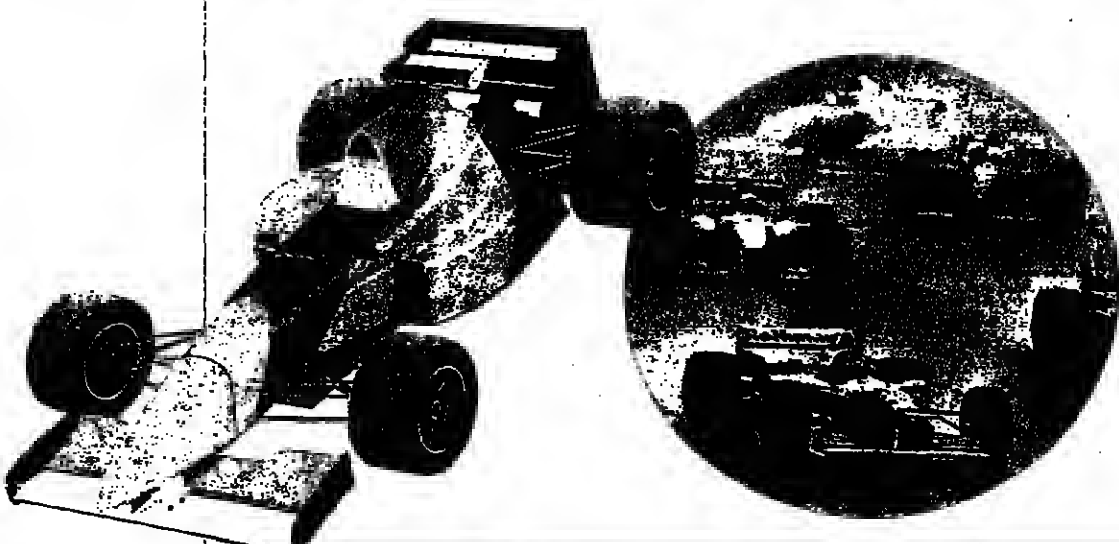
ENGINES

£26m		60
£18m		46
£15m		40
£12m		16
£10m		35
£8m		11
£6m		26
£4m		13
£3m		0
£2m		11

Team Position
Check Line:
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Results &
Top 50
Teams:
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July 10 1996

sport

OLYMPIC GAMES: With 100 days to go before the opening ceremony, the countdown to the Centennial Olympiad has begun in earnest. **Rupert Cornwell** reports from Atlanta on the glitz and glamour preceding all the razzmatazz

Heat is on for America's Big Chicken

On a bleak early April morning, whipped by an icy wind coursing between the downtown skyscrapers, you can hardly believe it. But unless the seasons have reversed themselves irrevocably, in just 100 days the Centennial Olympics will formally get under way in this very place, in a steamy all-enveloping heat that makes the tropics seem tender.

A record 197 competing teams will gather, not in Athens as history suggested, and certainly all of Greece insisted – but here in this surging metropolis of the "New South", where antiquity means life before shopping malls, and the closest you get to a Greek temple is four plexiglass and wire columns on Margaret Mitchell plaza at the corner of Peachtree and Forsyth streets. Ms Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* may be the legend of Atlanta. The reality is Newt Gingrich and

'If people don't know it's hot in Atlanta, they haven't been living on this planet'

Martin Luther King, CNN and Coca-Cola, and a refurbished city arising from a building site.

Indisputably, though, order is emerging from chaos. The red brick Olympic stadium, next to the old Atlanta Braves baseball stadium which will replace next year, is virtually complete. Huge highways gleam with fresh tarmac. The Centennial Olympic park on the previously derelict site just west of downtown – personalised paving bricks on sale for \$35 (£23.50) apiece – is taking shape, as is the adjoining Coca-Cola theme park where visitors will be able to race against the likes of Linford Christie and Carl Lewis in virtual reality 100 metre finals. The brand new Olympic village is ready too, fully air-conditioned on the downtown campus of Georgia Tech University.

Of course there are glitches – "a new worry every day," says Bob Brennan of the Atlanta Committee



Taking shape: The Olympic Stadium in Atlanta, where the Centennial Games will start in 100 days' time

Photograph: Ross Henderson

for the Olympic Games, the body responsible for the whole \$1.7bn (£1.15bn) enterprise. Latest among them is a legal battle between ACOG and the companies who designed the Olympic stadium about unpaid overtime and an alleged design flaw which brought a bank of floodlights crashing down from a 150ft steel tower last year, killing a welder.

There are complaints about the myriad construction sites around the city and the even greater disruptions which lie ahead this summer ("Don't blame me, I voted for Athens," proclaims a best-selling bumper sticker). Price-gouging by hotels and people letting rooms for the Games has drawn loud protest,

while ticket sales for some events are sluggish. Then there is the awkward shadow of another local notable, Jimmy Carter, never quite forgiven by the international Olympic movement for the US boycott of the 1980 Moscow games.

And, more basically, does Atlanta's image measure up? For all the city's fan, the 26th Olympiad means global prime time for the Bubba belt, meaning that the Confederate flag, symbol of slavery and Southern obduracy and still part of Georgia's state flag, will be seen on half a billion TV screens around the world. Nor is everyone as in-souciant as Atlanta's former mayor, Maynard Jackson, taking his leave four years ago from the splen-

dours of Barcelona. "We don't have the cathedral of the Sagrada Família," he told reporters, "but we do have the Big Chicken."

In other words, those seeking masterpieces of post-modernist religious architecture must look elsewhere. But for fans of fast food restaurants whose parking lots are graced by 63ft-tall statues of their prime menu item, this is it. Even so, when her big night comes, the southern belle will surely be ready. But she'd better wear a cool dress to the ball.

First and last in any conversation about these games comes the weather – those endless 90-degree, 90 per cent humidity days which add up to July in these parts. Not to put too

fine a point on it, Atlanta will be a sweatbath. The organisers have devised a system to keep horses cool, they have shifted the marathon to the kindest hour of 7.05am, and no less than 21 million pounds of ice are already being stockpiled to cool man and beast this summer. But ultimately there is no defeating Mother Nature. "If people don't know it's hot in Atlanta," says Brennan with weary defiance, "they haven't been living on this planet."

It is little known but true that Atlanta considered bidding for the 1984 Games which ultimately went to Los Angeles, setting up an informal group which went to have a look at Montreal, where the 1976 Games had just been held. But potential or-

ganisers concluded Atlanta was not ready. So what's the difference between then and now? A bigger city and better infrastructure, explains Brennan – "and Billy Payne."

Payne is ACOG's president, an Atlanta real estate lawyer and one-time college football star for whom the 1996 Games have been a holy mission, and whose life was an unbroken sequence of 18-hour days to ensure that mission succeeded. Payne has business failings, but lack of drive is not among them. Of late, wary of a suspect heart, he has slowed down, no longer arriving at the office at 3.30am to make European morning calls to the IOC in Switzerland. Even so, more than any others perhaps in history, these

Olympic Games, for better or worse, are identified with one man.

As 19 July approaches, however, the emphasis is shifting from strategic decisions of the ACOG high command to more mundane matters, like making sure the 70,000 spectators the Games will employ know what they are supposed to do, and testing out individual facilities. Most of these have already been given dry runs; the shopping track and field arena will be put through its paces when the official US Olympic team trials are held there next month.

Simultaneously a gigantic marketing exercise gathers speed. Half of Coca-Cola's \$1.3bn (£0.87bn) advertising budget for 1996 will be geared to its home-town Games. Souvenirs run from T-shirts and a suitably irritating children's mascot called Izzy (a character from a mythical land inside the Olympic torch, no less) to limited edition

'This is bigger than a World Fair, it's the largest peacetime event in the history of the US'

Fabergé eggs at \$5,000 (£3,350) a throw. At the very top of the line are 22-seat luxury boxes at the main stadium for every track and field session, plus the opening and closing ceremonies. A few are still available for a mere \$544,500 (£365,500) – food not included.

At best, these games will show only a small profit but, short of some organisational or terrorist calamity, they cannot but be a boon for the city. By the end of August ACOG will be out of business," Brennan says. "But Atlanta gets a \$500m (£335m) legacy: the stadium, the Olympic park, other sports facilities and new university residences. And, by then we're going to be one of the best known places in the world. Less than two dozen cities in the world have done this in 100 years. This is bigger than a World Fair, bigger than the 1994 World Cup, it's the largest peacetime event in the history of the US."

WEEKEND FIXTURES AND POOLS FORECAST

FA Carling Premiership		First Division	
1 Chelsea v Leeds	23 Swinton v Bournemouth	44 Oldham v Reading	56 Exeter v Gillingham
2 Coventry v QPR	24 Walsall v Bradford City	45 Doncaster v St Mirren	57 Queens Park v Albion
3 Manchester City v Sheffield Wednesday	25 York v Wycombe	46 Dundee v Dunfermline	58 Huddersfield v Shrewsbury
4 Middlesbrough v Wimbledon	Also playing (not on computer): Bristol Rovers v Blackpool; Carlisle v Walsingham	47 Hamilton v Motherwell	59 Queens Park v Albion
5 Nottingham Forest v Blackpool		48 St Johnstone v Dundee United	
6 Southampton v Manchester United			
7 West Ham v Bolton			
Playing Sunday: Newcastle v Aston Villa		Second Division	
Endsleigh Insurance League		50 Carlisle v Gillingham	62 Queen of the South v Stirling
First Division		51 Forth v Stirling	63 Stirling Albion v Forth
8 Barnsley v Reading	26 Bolton v Huddersfield	52 Queen of the South v Stirling	64 Stirling Albion v Forth
9 Birmingham v Luton	27 Bury v Torquay	53 Stirling Albion v Forth	65 Stirling Albion v Forth
10 Crystal Palace v Southampton	28 Carlisle v Gillingham	54 Brechin v Livingston	66 Stirling Albion v Forth
11 Huddersfield v Millwall	29 Colchester v Fulham	55 Caithness Thistle v Cowdenbeath	67 Stirling Albion v Forth
12 Oxford v Wolverhampton	30 Colchester v Fulham	56 East Stirling v Alloa	68 Stirling Albion v Forth
13 Shrewsbury v Sunderland	31 Colchester v Fulham	57 Queen's Park v Albion	69 Stirling Albion v Forth
14 Stoke v Portsmouth	32 Colchester v Fulham	58 Huddersfield v Shrewsbury	70 Stirling Albion v Forth
15 Torquay v Luton	33 Colchester v Fulham	59 Queens Park v Albion	71 Stirling Albion v Forth
16 Watford v Port Vale	34 Colchester v Fulham	60 Huddersfield v Shrewsbury	72 Stirling Albion v Forth
17 West Bromwich v Gillingham	35 Colchester v Fulham	61 Stirling Albion v Forth	73 Stirling Albion v Forth
Playing Sunday: Charlton v Derby; Ipswich v Norwich		Third Division	
Gill Vase Conference		62 Queen of the South v Stirling	74 Stirling Albion v Forth
18 Bradford v Notts County	36 Colchester v Fulham	63 Stirling Albion v Forth	75 Stirling Albion v Forth
19 Burnley v Peterborough	37 Colchester v Fulham	64 Stirling Albion v Forth	76 Stirling Albion v Forth
20 Chesham v Bristol City	38 Colchester v Fulham	65 Stirling Albion v Forth	77 Stirling Albion v Forth
21 Hull City v Gillingham	39 Colchester v Fulham	66 Stirling Albion v Forth	78 Stirling Albion v Forth
22 Swanssea v Brighton	40 Colchester v Fulham	67 Stirling Albion v Forth	79 Stirling Albion v Forth
Playing Sunday: Hibernian v Celtic		Premier Division	
Bell's Scottish League		80 Stirling Albion v Forth	92 Stirling Albion v Forth
40 Aberdeen v Motherwell	41 Aberdeen v Motherwell	81 Stirling Albion v Forth	93 Stirling Albion v Forth
42 Kilmarnock v Falkirk	43 Kilmarnock v Falkirk	82 Stirling Albion v Forth	94 Stirling Albion v Forth
44 Raith Rovers v Hearts	45 Raith Rovers v Hearts	83 Stirling Albion v Forth	95 Stirling Albion v Forth
46 Rangers v Partick	47 Rangers v Partick	84 Stirling Albion v Forth	96 Stirling Albion v Forth

Hastings ready for his big kick-off

The news that Gavin Hastings, formerly captain of the Scotland rugby union team, was trying out for the Scottish Claymores of the World League of American Football was greeted in many quarters as nothing more substantial than a publicity stunt.

The Claymores, who struggled on and off the field during their inaugural campaign last year, would doubtless welcome an athlete of Hastings' standing, with his presence on the sidelines guaranteed to increase an average attendance which failed to top 10,000.

If it is a stunt, then someone should have a quiet word in the 34-year-old full-back's ear, because he has gone about winning the job of place-kicker with a single-mindedness and determination which characterised much of his play on the rugby field.

In the spartan environment of the Claymores' training camp in Carrollton, Georgia, he was just another number. A number with some celebrity, perhaps, but the kicker's function is too important to be given away. If Hastings does make the team, he will have earned his place on merit.

"I can't believe anyone thinks this is some kind of joke, that I

would take two weeks out of my life for a stunt," he said after a gruelling practice session. "I knew I was in for a complete culture shock, but I'm still coming to terms with how difficult it is. I'm on this vertical learning curve, where I'm discovering something new every day."

In terms of physical prowess and temperament, an international rugby full-back should be the equal of his American football counterpart, but perceived similarities in kicking technique are misleading. Where in rugby the kicker dictates the tempo of the attempt, on the grid-iron it is a matter of timing and teamwork in the face of 11 hostile opponents.

"The biggest adjustment Gavin will face is that he will be the target, the guy they are trying to knock senseless," said Mick Luckhurst, a former rugby full-back who enjoyed a seven-year career kicking for the Atlanta Falcons in the National Football League.

"He's used to doing whatever he wants before a kick, but in American football it is less than a second from when the ball is snapped to when the kicker makes contact. Any longer, and the kick will be blocked."

The transition has not been

Nick Halling on the Scotsman hoping to make the grade in American Football

smooth for Hastings, who has enjoyed few favours in the relentless environment of an American football training camp, where his status as a rugby full-back has cut little ice. The key has been harnessing his raw potential within a strictly disciplined framework.

"There are three of us in-



Hastings: Earning respect

involved in the process: the snapper, the holder and myself and, if we're not working in unison, then we have no chance," Hastings said. "The kicking technique is not essentially different, but working with a snapper and holder is a whole new experience for me."

Jim Criner, the Claymores' head coach, has been impressed by his professionalism and dedication. "Gavin is as competitive as any player I've coached, and since camp started I've seen him improve every single day," he said. "But he won't be given the job if he can't do it aod, to be honest, Gavin wouldn't want it that way. However, I think he has every chance."

The unseasonably inclement Georgia weather offered little assistance for kickers, but Hastings caught the eye when he converted four of six field goal attempts on a sodden field. A successful 47-yard kick into a strong side wind in a pre-season scrimmage against the Frankfurt Galaxy served to underline the rapid strides he has made.

Then there are his personal qualities. Foreigners, especially kickers, are not always welcome on American football teams. Many break down into factions, with kickers, who gen-

erally practice alone, left on the outside. During his time in Georgia, however, Hastings has clearly gained his team-mates' acceptance and respect.

"He's just brought all of us together," said Paul McCullum, the Claymores' punter. "He has captained his country, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that he has these leadership qualities."

It is still too early to say for certain whether Hastings will be on the sidelines when the Claymores begin their season against the London Monarchs on Sunday. His progress in camp has led the coaching staff to believe that he can handle kick-offs, extra point attempts and short field goals. Longer kicks may be entrusted to McCullum.

The final decision may rest with the player, who has little to gain and much to lose, should he make a fool of himself.

"I want to make a positive contribution to this team and to the World League," he said. "But if that's not possible, then I probably won't do it. You could argue that it would have been easier for me to continue playing international rugby. Kicking an American football looks so simple, but I can assure you it's not."

Amateurs seek help

Boxing

Ian Irwin, Britain's boxing coach, yesterday appealed to professional promoters to leave leading amateurs free to compete in the Olympic Games.

John Morris, the secretary of the Boxing Board of Control, called for a single organisation to run both codes of the sport, thus helping amateurs in their campaign to reach the Games.

The lone British entry for the Atlanta Olympics is David Burke, the 21-year-old Liverpool featherweight who reached the semi-finals of the European Championships, and then secured qualification by beating Scott Harrison of Scotland in an eliminator. Since the 1994 Commonwealth Games, Irwin has, for example, lost the heavy-weight Danny Williams, the hantamweight Spencer Oliver and the light-welterweight Peter Richardson to the paid ranks. All three would have been candidates to go to Atlanta.

Irwin said: "I think what we've got to do is perhaps look

after our amateurs better, giving more government support so they won't be as quick to turn professional. Then we could have some discussion with the professional people and say: 'At the moment it's all one way. At the end of the day you will get a better product if you can leave them with us until the end of the Olympic cycle.'

"We should have had people like Naseem Hamed going to the Olympics with us this year. But we have had an ever-increasing loss to the professional ranks. We've got one left from the last Commonwealth Games and one left from the Barcelona Olympics."

"For Barcelona, there were four qualifying tournaments. This time they decided to make the European Championships the only qualifier, which made it very, very tough."

"What made it tougher still was that they seeded any European boxer who reached the quarter-final of last year's World Championships. It was very sad indeed that Burke and Harrison had to box off because they are both featherweights."

"That should never happen again. Harrison won a European bronze and he's the only boxer to have won a medal and not go to the Olympics. That takes some accepting."

Morris replied: "My own personal belief is that there should be an umbrella organisation for all boxing in Britain. It should have sufficient powers to sustain a slightly higher age limit for people turning professional [which is 18 at the moment]."

"That would give the amateurs that bit more continuity. Nineteen could be a start and that would be well received by the amateurs."

"I don't want it to appear that I am levelling any criticism at the England team, or those who prepared them. In their coach Ian Irwin they have a first class and very dedicated man. If they are disappointed, we are disappointed, so what do you do? You see if you can get together to do something about it, and what could we do in the next four years to produce a strong British amateur team for the Sydney Olympics."

Harmon in the clear after neck injury

Rugby League

The Leeds captain, Neil Harmon, has been cleared of any serious damage after being carried off in a neck-brace on Monday, writes Dave Hadfield.

Harmon collapsed after making a tackle in the defeat by St Helens at Headingley and was taken to hospital for scans on his neck and back, which had gone into spasm. He has now been given a clean bill of health and could be ready for Leeds' next game, at Oldham on Saturday.

The former Wigan and England player, Barrie-Jon Mather, who was carried off playing for the Western Reds in Perth at the weekend, has also been cleared of any spinal injury. However, a broken jaw will deny Paris St-Germain the services of the Australian stand-off, Todd Brown, for at least six weeks.

London Broncos feel they are being singled out for unfair treatment from referees and they are asking the Rugby Foot-

ball League to review the tapes of their first three Super League games. The Broncos' football manager, Robbie Moore, is concerned about the penalty count. "We're asking Greg McCullum, the referees' supervisor, to look at the videos of those games and tell us where we are going wrong," he said. "It's the League's urgent attention, otherwise our players will not mention our fans – will start to become disillusioned."

The Oceania Cup, designed to bring Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa and the Cook Islands into regular international competition after their successes in the Centenary World Cup, has been called off for this season. The tournament has been scrapped because Super League's appeal is to be heard in court in Australia in May.

The Oceania tour of the British Isles, including matches in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, in October, should be unaffected.

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April 10 1996

IN BRIEF
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in demolished

6-3 6-4; F Fetterlein (Den) bt T Hamman (IC)
1-6 6-1 5-0; J Van Herck (IBel) bt A Jans
(Swe) 6-6 6-3; J Fleunan (Fri) bt O Gogor
(Ukr) 5-7 6-2 6-3; M Bhupathi (Ind) bt P S
nath (Ind) 6-3 6-2; T Engqvist (Swe) bt
Petchey (GB) 6-4 6-4; J Stark (US) bt M N
man (Swe) 6-7 7-6

Brittle dares leading clubs to break away

Rugby Union
STEVE BALE

English rugby's governing body yesterday called the bluff of its leading clubs and, in effect, dared them to carry out their threat – eight months after rugby union went open – of breaking away to form a rival, professional organisation which would pay for itself from the broadcasting and sponsorship of its own rebel competitions.

The Rugby Football Union – in the person of Cliff Brittle, chairman of its executive committee, justifying himself after a week of personalised vilification – dramatically laid down the law at Twickenham by insisting that it would remain in total charge of administering rugby and the monies coming into the game.

The union's attitude of "thus far, no further" also extends to its plans for next season's competitions. Contrary to the stated wish of the clubs, there will be relegation as originally planned from the First Division of the Courage Championship. This means West Hartlepool are already down, with Gloucester or Saracens likely to join them.

Brittle confirmed that this season's first four First Division clubs would be entered into the European Cup, the remaining six into an Anglo-Welsh competition. The clubs had wanted wider European and cross-border involvement and a reduction from 18 to 11 domestic

fixtures, with a 12-team First Division playing each other once.

The union's determination to maintain an intermediate representative level between club and country means there will still be divisional rugby – although not a Divisional Championship – next autumn when London, the Midlands, North and South-West will play Argentina, the Junior Springboks and Queensland.

All of this is anathema to the clubs, who want to run and finance themselves and now have to put up or shut up. There will be no formal response until after a meeting tomorrow, but last night a spokesman for English Professional Rugby Clubs, the umbrella body for the First and Second Divisions, said: "Given the complete lack of willingness beforehand by Brittle to negotiate it was entirely expected. He is playing a very dangerous game."

One club official says plans for competitions supported by television are in place, to be disclosed as soon as a breakaway is declared. Yesterday the RFU insisted that all broadcasters had pledged to deal only with it, but either way there is great scepticism at Twickenham that clubs will be able to afford the contracts to which they are already committing themselves.

"We are talking about the soul of the game," Malcolm Phillips, a former England centre from Lancashire who sits

with Brittle on the RFU's negotiating panel, said yesterday. "If we get this one wrong, we are into some pretty horrid scenarios. In soccer the clubs dictate to the union. In rugby league they can't meet their wage bills so they sell out to Murdoch."

"They are two scenarios that could befall us if we are not careful. Neither the union nor the clubs have the money to fund the open game at the moment. People are making promises they cannot keep and people are going to suffer. The players will suffer from broken contracts. The clubs will go bust."

The clubs' alternative view is that the means of avoiding such an eventuality is for them autonomously to control their own destiny. But any RFU sympathy for this view evaporated when Sir John Hall of Newcastle United – and latterly Newcastle RFC – suggested that the England team would be no more than an optional extra under the new dispensation.

"We are welcoming some wealthy individuals into the game who are used to getting their own way and whose motivations and experience in this game are not the same as ours," Brittle said. To which Don Rutherford, the Gloucester who has been the RFU's technical director for 26 years, added: "The arrival of a new man on the block with charismatic qualities seems to have confused the minds of many League One and Two club officials."

"The newcomer is Sir John Hall and I suppose it is inevitable that he should wish to compare rugby with soccer; the latter is his main sporting experience. This is a dangerous assumption as England soccer is ranked 23 in the world while England rugby is in the top four."

The gap seems unbridgeable. "We've tried for the last three months to be in a placatory negotiating situation with the Rugby Union," Mike Coley, Gloucester's chief executive, said yesterday. "They have totally ignored the majority of what we've been trying to do and have come up and said: 'We're in charge, do as you're told.'"

"It is only right that we have the television rights and sponsorship monies from those competitions in which we play. If we are going to have a professional game we have to have the money to pay the professional game. No club in England has that money without the television rights and sponsorship."

Game on the brink, page 23



Tall story: Scotland's Gordon Sherry (left) has words with Tom Watson at Augusta yesterday. Photograph: Allsport

Norman eyes new jacket

Golf

TIM GLOVER
reports from Augusta

Every year Greg Norman has a cruel reminder that what is missing from his wardrobe is a green jacket. The winners of the Masters not only get their own bespoke blazer but exclusive use of the champions' locker room, and poor old Norman has to change with the mere mortals. Yesterday he tried to make light of the one that got away. Norman was asked how many Masters he could have won had he had the rub of the green. "I don't think like that," he said. "I have been lucky in other things. It is not cast in stone that I have to win the Masters. I bet that there are some things that I've done that people who have won the Masters would like to do. I'm still chasing the elusive rainbow. My career's not over yet."

In fact, Norman firmly believes he will get better with age. "My best golf will come in the forties," he said. "My life gets better the older I get. You learn so much as time goes by." Norman is 41 and he has just played the worst golf of his career, missing two cuts in succession. "I'm not concerned about that," he said. "I didn't enjoy doing it but it might be a blessing in disguise. I don't worry about the past."

Asked what had suddenly gone wrong with his game, Norman replied: "My head. Certain things are meant to happen. They even out in the long run. It was just one of those weird things. It just disappeared." He said that on a scale of 10, he would currently register seven. "Missing those cuts might just tweak my mental approach. No other tournament generates such a feeling. This is pure golf. No corporate boxes, no tented village, perfect conditions."

Norman, the world No 1 and the dominant force in the game for a decade, had won only two major championships, the Open at Turnberry in 1986 and again at Royal St George's, Sandwich, in 1993. Despite his victory he has no soft spot for the Kent links. "I played great golf but it is not my favourite place. There are too many blind shots."

Nick Faldo, once the world No 1 and now down to eighth, has enjoyed the rub of the green at Augusta National, winning the Masters in play-offs in 1989 and 1990. "My desire is always the same with the majors," Faldo said. "I've been planning for this for six months. Experience will pay dividends. You need to know what you're doing, know your routes and know when to play aggressively and defensively. I've been playing nicely for the past couple of months and have just been waiting for something to happen... or waiting for this week."

Both Norman and Faldo believe the greens at Augusta National, traditionally almost as fast as lightning, will be at their quickest than for some years. Faldo reckons that on the stimp-meter, the device that measures the speed of the greens, the reading will be 13. In golf terms that's around March 1. "That's just the uphill ones," Faldo said. "You've just got to steer the ball into the flat spots, two-putt and get out of there."

Faldo left the European Tour for the greener grass of America 15 months ago. "Week in, week out you're playing in good conditions with great facilities, and the weather helps," Faldo said. "I'm getting more comfortable with these conditions and I'd like to think I'm ready for this week. This will be the severest test of nerve in golf. It becomes the feel factor. You can't just blast in, miss a green and get up and down. You can't do that here. If you're nervous and under pressure you've still got to hit great shots all the time. And you've got to be putting well."

Faldo is having treatment to a shoulder but says it is not causing him a problem. "I had a spasm and it took me a couple of days to work it out," he said. "I have warm-up rubs every morning and it's fine. As long as I'm fit and strong I have another seven or eight years with a realistic chance of winning the Masters. I'm sure someone in their fifties could win here. I'll bet Jack believes he can win."

Jack Nicklaus, who is 56, won the last of his six Masters titles in 1986 when Norman was joint runner-up. On Sunday he won the Tradition tournament on the seniors tour in Phoenix. "Jack will be a contender," Faldo said, "because he wants to do it."

Faldo also thought that his Ryder Cup partner, Colin Montgomerie, will have a good tournament. "He's playing very well from tee to green and it will come down to how well he puts. I think he's got it. He has the desire and he wants to play well in every tournament he enters. That's a very difficult thing to do. People don't give guys enough credit for playing well week in, week out and being on the leaderboard all the time."

When somebody mentioned Norman and the missed cuts, Faldo said: "Write him off quick. I think that's the end of him, really. He's gone. I'm not surprised that somebody misses

two cuts in a row. I'm more surprised when someone misses five in a row, is a sixth alternate and then wins a tournament. If a guy is off his game for five minutes he's off. I'm sure Norman is going to be a major contender this week."

The Great White Shark will not need reminding that the likes of Faldo and Big Jack and Gentle Ben and Little Wookiee – and even Sandy Lyle – will be changing in the champions' locker room.

Keegan's pride, page 23

Busst facing a year out of action

Football

David Busst will face at least a year out of football before he can begin the battle to rebuild his career in the wake of the Old Trafford incident that saw his right leg shattered.

The Coventry City defender underwent an initial operation on Monday evening at Hope Hospital, Salford, and faces more surgery today on the horrific injury that halted Monday's Premiership match against Manchester United for nine minutes.

Raymond Ross, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Hope Hospital, was optimistic that Busst would make a full recovery but warned that progress would be slow. "I would say it will take a minimum of three months for the fracture to heal and it could be six," Ross said. "I don't think he will be back in football before 12 months."

Ross has consulted the Highfield Road club's surgeon, John Aldridge, about Busst and it has been agreed that he will stay in Hope Hospital, where a nail will be inserted in the bone early next week. "He has been under observation and the leg is looking good," added Mr Ross. "He suffered an open fracture of the right tibia and we have applied an external fixator to hold the fracture and cleaned the wound. Although it is a serious injury, I am optimistic the fracture will heal spontaneously."

Even if Busst maintains his recovery schedule, he will be approaching his 30th birthday when ready to return a year from now. Coventry, however, have firmly dismissed reports claiming that his career is over. Their secretary, Graham Hower, said yesterday: "He is a strong individual. For people to write him off at this stage is quite ridiculous."

The Liverpool utility player, Steve Harkness, who broke his leg playing against Coventry, could be back in action sooner than expected. Harkness suffered a double fracture in the defeat at Highfield Road on Saturday. Original estimates were set at nine months for a full recovery but his manager, Roy Evans, said: "The leg has been pinned and it looks to be a successful job. The signs are that it looks a nice, neat job and it might not be long."

Arsenal are set to finalise the £1.3m signing of the French international left-back, Bixente Lizarazu, later this week. The Gunners want Lizarazu to sign a pre-contract which will allow him stay with Bordeaux as they attempt to win the UEFA Cup.

Keegan's pride, page 23

The Twickenham battle lines

English Professional Rugby Union Clubs (EPRUC) have submitted 12 draft principles to the Rugby Football Union. Yesterday, the RFU announced an outright refusal to negotiate on three.

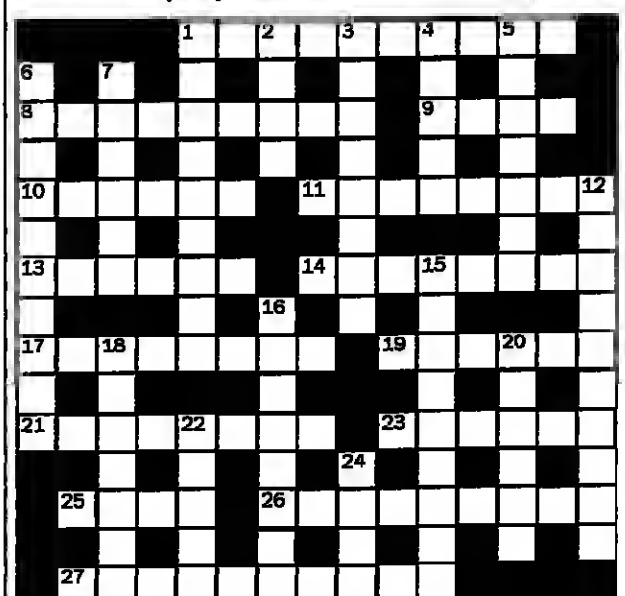
1. That all monies raised from competitions be paid to participating clubs.
2. That payments to representative players be made through EPRUC.
3. That an independent body be established to run the professional game.

The RFU yesterday announced it would negotiate on eight of the remaining nine points, the ninth being to note that the "golden" share in EPRUC originally offered to the RFU had been reduced to a non-voting share.

1. Distribution of TV rights and sponsorship.
2. A success fee for clubs participating in knock-out competitions.
3. Conditions to be placed by the union on relevant monies raised.
4. Explore together one contract for players with the union retaining primacy of availability for representative rugby.
5. Playing of major games at Twickenham, but without automatic right of access.
6. Reorganisation and reform of the RFU so as to administer an open/professional game.
7. A structured season having regard to international and representative games.
8. Explore the possibility of renegotiating sponsorship agreements as and when existing contracts allow.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 2357, Wednesday 10 April By Aquila



- ACROSS**
- 1 Theory of photographic fixer-paper (10)
 - 8 In this transition, ran across a ground (9)
 - 9 Press Club? (4)
 - 10 Places for putting vegetables (6)
 - 11 Defenders' blunders have ends (3,5)
 - 13 Make-up for the complexion? (6)
 - 14 Scope within Circle Line for greenhouse growing fruit (8)
 - 17 Archangel's granny? (8)
 - 19 Impudence shown to Olympic finalists of France (6)
 - 21 Close call, losing head when running to ground? (8)
- DOWN**
- 23 Plan to put church in same resort (6)
 - 25 Notice Italian gallery opening? (4)
 - 26 Coming from Rouen, get a train (9)
 - 27 Tiny characters to trap unwary signalers? (5,6)
 - 1 Suffering a bash near the Spanish Steps, reportedly (9)
 - 2 Deftly udder? (4)
 - 3 Difficult duty to entrust to industry (4,4)
 - 4 Contemplating having some money in Guernsey? (5)
 - 5 Place apart for tea-blender on foreign soil (7)
 - 6 Big animal out east, under the sun (10)

Tuesday's Solution

ACROSS
1. EPRUC
8. TRANSITION
9. PRESS
10. VEG
11. DEFENSE
13. MAKEUP
14. CIRCLE
17. GRANNY
19. IMPUDENCE
21. CLOSE

DOWN
23. CHURCH
25. NOTICE
26. TRAIN
27. TINY

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